NUMBER 72

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FORTEAN TIMES

THE JOURNAL OF STRANGE PHENOMENA

THE BIG SLEEP

Who are the real life Rip Van Winkles?

JFK MYTHS:

30 years of cover-ups and conspiracies

Hell found in Siberia? • Cats talk Turkey
Thai nipple enigma • Satanic abuse update • Born again?

9 770308 589118 72

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Contents

ISSUE 72 : DECEMBER/JANUARY 1994

CAROLINA OLSSON - PAGE 27

EDITORIAL 4

The Fortean Convention • Improved service for US subscribers • Christmas competition

STRANGE DAYS 5

Bullseye projectile survivals • Siamese sundries • New Java skull • Absent-minded drivers • Amazing bridge hands • It's raining men • Snack attacks • Talking cats • Divine ingratitude

PHENOMENOMIX 21

HUNT EMERSON'S humorous look at the world

THE BIG SLEEP 23

BOB RICKARD reviews some of the more extreme examples of the 'Sleeping Beauty' syndrome. The prodigious 32-year sleep of Carolina Olsson is described by ROLF J.K. OLSSON

SHOOTING DOWN THE MYTH 30

Thirty years after the Kennedy assassination, GLENN B. FLEMING outlines the range of conspiracy theories about this ever-intriguing puzzle

THE FT INTERVIEW: MARY'S CHILDREN 36

BOB RICKARD talks to JENNY COCKELL, who claims to recall a former life as Mary Sutton

FROM OUR FILES 42

- HOAX: Rumours of drilling down to Hell analysed by *Paul Sieveking*
- MISSING TIME: *Peter Brookesmith* goes to the Sheffield UFO Conference
- LOVECATS - THE NEXT GENERATION: Possible jungle cat hybrids examined by *Dr Karl P. N. Shuker*
- BEDEVILLED: *Mike Dash* on the latest Satanic ritual abuse cases
- UNEARTHED: Four recent submarine discoveries reported by *Steve Moore*
- DIARY OF A MAD PLANET: Weather watch August/September 1993
- SECRET COUNTRY: Silbury Hill and West Kennet long barrow *Janet and Colin Bord*

JENNY COCKELL PAGE 36

FORUM 53

Anthony McLuskey • Robert Anton Wilson • Dennis Stacy • Michael Goss

REVIEWS 59

Forbidden Archælogy • The Only Planet of Choice • A Theory of Almost Everything • Dreamtime, Dreamspace • The Damned Universe of Charles Fort • Magwatch

LETTERS 63

An 'impossible' solid? • Flashes in the dark • Localised combustions • Solar phenomenon • Meeting Pan

NOTICEBOARD 66

Fortean meetings, lectures, events, research, products and offers

COVER: MAIN PICTURE MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY
INSET: THE HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION

WHY 'FORTEAN'?

CHARLES FORT (1874-1932)

Fortean Times is a bi-monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on all manner of strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents, formed in 1973 to continue the work of the iconoclastic philosopher CHARLES FORT. Fort was sceptical about scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued for and against various theories and phenomena according to their own beliefs, rather than the rules of evidence. He was appalled that data not fitting the collective paradigm was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining a thing).

Fort was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. He coined the term 'teleportation' which has passed into general usage through science fiction. His dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses his philosophy of Continuity and the 'doctrine of the hyphen', in which everything is in an intermediate state between extremes. He had notions of the universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena. Far from being an over-credulous man, Fort cut at the very roots of credulity: "I cannot accept that the products of minds are subject matter for beliefs ... I conceive of nothing, in religion, science, or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."

Fort was born in Albany, New York, in 1874 into a family of Dutch immigrants. Beatings by a tyrannical father helped set him against authority and dogma, and on leaving home at the age of 18 he hitch-hiked around the world to put some "capital into the bank of experience." At 22 he contracted malaria, married his nurse and settled down to 20 years of impoverished journalism in the Bronx. During this time he read extensively in the literature of science, taking notes on small squares of paper in a cramped shorthand of his own invention, which he filed in shoe boxes.

In 1916, when he was 42, Fort came into a modest inheritance, just enough to relieve him of the necessity of having to earn a living. He started writing *The Book of the Damned*, which his friend, the novelist Theodore Dreiser, bullied his own publisher into printing in 1919. Fort fell into a depression, burnt all his notes (which numbered some 40,000) as he had done a few years earlier, and in 1921 set sail for London, where he spent eight years living near the British Museum (39 Marchmont Street) and wrote *New Lands* (1923). Returning to New York, he published *Lo!* in 1931 and *Wild Talents* in 1932, shortly before he died. He left 60,000 notes, now in the New York Public Library.

THE GANG OF FORT
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© Fortean Times December 1993 – January 1994 ISSN 0308 5899

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CAVEAT

The opinions of contributors and interviewees are not necessarily those of the editors. FT itself has no corporate view except to bring the widest range of interpretations to stimulate discussion.

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Submissions are invited of suitable articles, news, art, cartoons, letters and reviews. Preliminary discussion with the editors is advisable. Text can be submitted on floppy disks, but check with the editors first. Submissions may be edited. FT assumes no responsibility for submissions, but all reasonable care will be taken while they are in FT's possession. Requests for return of material should be accompanied by stamped addressed envelope.

CLIPPINGS

All clippings, references, etc, should be identified by source, date and clipster's name. Mail or fax them to the editorial address (above).

SUBSCRIPTIONS - UK

One year (6 issues). £12. Two years (12 issues) £20. For payment and inquiries by phone, ring FREEPHONE 0800 581409. Major credit cards accepted – or make cheques/ money orders payable to: **JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING, and send to Freepost SW6096, Frome, Somerset BA11 1YA.**

SUBSCRIPTIONS - OVERSEAS

One year (6 issues). £15 or US$30. Two years (12 issues) £26 or US$50. For payment or inquiries by phone, ring (+44) 373 451777. Major credit cards accepted – or make sterling cheques/ money orders drawn upon a London bank payable to: **JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING, and send to Fortean Times, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1DX, UK.**
US subscribers can deel direct with our American subscription agent, Fenner Reed & Jackson, PO Box 754, Manhasset, NY 1130. Tel: 516 627 3836, Fax: 516 627 1972.

US POSTMASTER

Fortean Times (ISSN 0308 5899) is published every two months for US$30.00 per year. Second Class postage pending at Manhasset NY. Please send address changes to Fenner, Reed & Jackson Inc. at PO Box 754, Manhasset, NY 11030.

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

DISPLAY or CLASSIFIED:
contact **Ronnie Hackston** or **Dan Squirrell** at John Brown Publishing Ltd: The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 6LU, UK. Tel: 071 381 6007 or Fax: 071 381 3930.

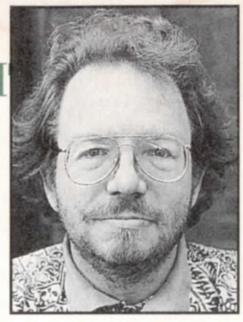
PUBLISHER

John Brown Publishing Ltd, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 6LU, UK. Tel: 071 381 6007 or Fax: 071 381 3930.
Managing Editor: Fiona Jerome.
Publisher: Vic Lime.

DISTRIBUTION

UK trade distribution by UMD, Castle House, 37/45 Paul Street, London EC2A 4PB Tel:. 071-490-2020 Fax: 071-490-1239 USA newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors Inc, 2020 Superior St, Sandusky, OH 44870, USA.

Printed in the UK.



Bob Rickard

Paul Sieveking

Sleeping Beauties

● The main feature this issue concerns unusually prolonged sleep. Traditionally, this has been classified as an anomaly of sleep along with comas, sleeping sickness and narcolepsy, but our brief research of the sparse historical information on the subject suggests that most cases would be diagnosed differently today. They were more akin to trance and accompanied by phenomena familiar from studies of hypnoid states: cataleptic rigidity of limbs; suggestibility; multiple personalities and inspired oration; enhancement of the senses to ESP-like levels; suppression of normal body functions; immunity to pain often coexisting with hypersensitivity; and selective amnesia. Some of these 'Sleeping Beauties' might be distantly related to the self-victimisers and confabulators discussed in our previous two issues.

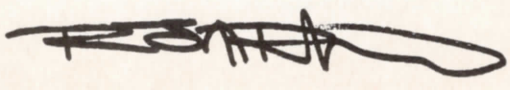
● Get your forward planners out! The first annual *Fortean Times Convention* will be held over the weekend 18-19 June 1994 at the Students' Union Building of London University, Malet Street, London W1. Each of the two days will be divided into two sessions ... a selection of speakers and topics in the morning and a specific theme in the afternoon: Near Death Experiences (18th) and Spontaneous Human Combustion (19th). Running concurrently will be a continuous show of rare film and TV Forteana, a special seminar each day, and a roomful of dealers in books, videos and probably alien artifacts, T-shirts etc. A special discount on admission will be offered to subscribers – more information and form next issue.

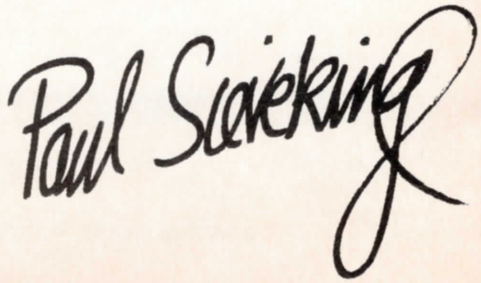
● We are pleased to announce an improvement in our service to our North American subscribers. Each issue will be specially freighted to our new US subscription agent – Fenner, Reed & Jackson, Box 754, Manhasset, NY 11030; phone: (516) 627 3836 or fax (516) 627 1972 for direct insertion into the US postal system, which should greatly improve on the present notoriously slow shipping times. As an added convenience, readers will be able to remit directly to this agent.

● We are sure that readers will join with us in wishing two of our friends and colleagues a speedy recovery: Cecilia Boggis following a stroke, and Loren Coleman after falling some 20 feet onto his back while rock climbing.

● **COMPETITION.** Beginning this issue, we plan to offer copies of our lead review (it might be a book, video, or something else appropriate) to the first three correct answers to a simple question. This issues's question is: In which country is the iron pillar, allegedly immune from rust, which Boris Yeltsin visited recently? Answers (by mail or fax to the editorial address), must reach us before February 1994. The first three correct answers, drawn at random from a suitable container, will receive *Forbidden Archeology* by Michael Cremo and Richard Thompson.

The Editors





STRANGE DAYS

16 pages of worldwide weirdness

SANTA STUCK

The would-be burglar stuck for over an hour in this Oceanside, California, chimney, just below the Christmas stockings, is an extremely embarrassed (and sooty) Frank Morales. He was discovered by Lawrence and Margie Beavers when they came downstairs to investigate shouting and banging that woke them at 2:00am on 4 January 1993. At first the Beavers could not figure out where the anguished cries were coming from. "Where are you?" Margie called out. "Up your chimney", came the reply. Police and firemen were called and they had a good laugh as they took souvenir pictures before demolishing the brickwork to get the dangling man out of his predicament. Morales, described as a 42-year-old transient, is quite a surrealist ... not content with his poor imitation of that better-known red-clad transient and seasonal housebreaker, he told police he "dove into the chimney" to escape pursuit and then decided to steal the piano. "Ho! Ho! Ho!" chortled the police as they charged him with burglary and resisting arrest. *[AP] 5 Jan 1993.*

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Fortean headlines from newspapers around the world

5 CHINESE CAPTURED IN DUBLIN MOUNTAINS
Irish Independent, 19 July 1979.

HEAVEN IS...A WARM COW PAT
Sun, 6 May 1992.

FROG GLANDS PUT DOCTORS JUMP AHEAD OF INFECTION
D.Telegraph, 9 May 1992.

PIGEONS GET SUNSTROKE
Nottingham Evening Post, 29 May 1992.

TEACHER FIRED AS STUDENT CASTRATES PIG WITH HIS TEETH
Bangkok Post, 21 June 1992.

MASSIVE BLACK HOLE FOUND IN SKY
Cleveland Plain Dealer, 10 July 1992.

INCIDENCE OF FATAL ASIAN FISH BUG ROCKETS
China Daily, 10 Oct 1992.

POLICE 'HAMPERED BY RULES'
D.Telegraph, 17 Dec 1992.

THE FAR SIDE By GARY LARSON

"So, Professor Jenkins! . . . My old nemesis! . . . We meet again, but this time the advantage is mine! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

TERMINATION CLAWS

It was the kind of story we at FT adore - it concerned the killing of Grady Stiles, a professional sideshow freak, allegedly by his wife Mary and her son Harry Newman. His relations are accused of hiring their neighbour Chris Wyant to shoot him at his trailer-home at Gibsonton in Florida. Stiles earned a living from his deformed hands which were shaped like two massive pincers and posed as 'The Lobster Boy' in a large fake aquarium.

Unfortunately Stiles, no boy at 55, had a mean disposition and regularly beat his family. In support of their plea of self-defence, all three accused brought forward a truly bizarre line-up of character witnesses ... 'The Bearded Lady' testified that 'Lobster Boy' was a 'cruel tyrant'; the 'Fire Eater' said Stiles didn't know his own strength; and 'The Alligator Man' told of Stiles' alcoholic binges, during which he loved to 'pen cans of beer with his pincers'.

In the end a mis-trial was ruled - because a sheriff's deputy mentioned a lie-detector test which was not admissible as evidence - and a new trial was set for October 25th in Tampa. *USA Today, 22 July; D.Mirror, 23 July 1993.*

MEKONG MONSTER

Rumours have recently been flying around Vientiane, capital of Laos, that a five-headed dragon has been seen repeatedly in the Mekong River. This mottled green, brown and yellow reptile breathes no fire, measures 15 feet from head to tail, sees through five pairs of shiny black eyes and finds children most appetising. Few people acknowledge seeing the dragon themselves; most sightings are attributed to a friend of a friend. Some say that the rumours are based on a type of catfish that grows up to ten feet long and is considered a delicacy. Drought lowered the river enough in 1992 to bring these normally deep-dwelling fish to the surface. *Wall Street Journal, 21 Oct 1992.*

BALLOON WONDER

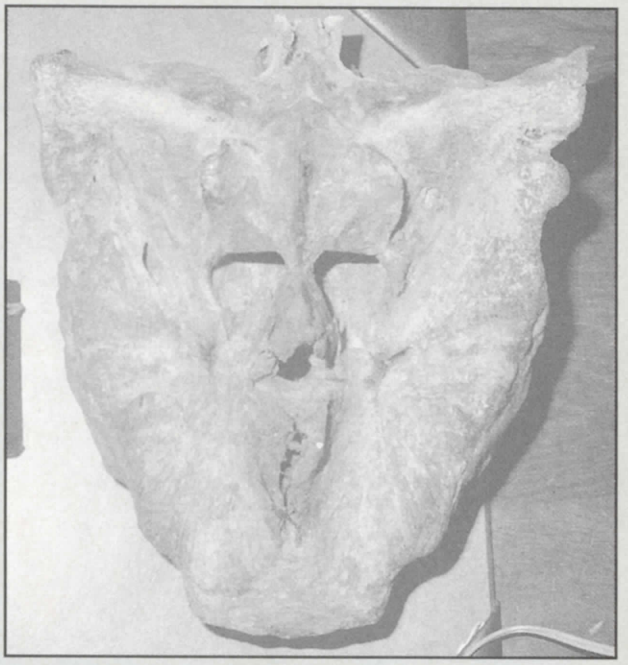
Pupils at the primary school in Nantymoel, Mid Glamorgan, Wales, released 3,000 helium-filled balloons in a fund-raising event on 23 June. Each had a card tied to its neck with the school's address and the name of the pupils who had released it. Not long after, Debbie Watkins and Stuart Jones, aged 10, received a letter on headed notepaper from the Shangri-la Hotel in Beijing, postmarked 28 June, from hotel worker Cheung Xin.

The balloon had fallen to earth in the Chinese capital, 5,053 miles away, after five days' flight. It would have had to average over 40mph. It is possible that it rose to its equilibrium height of about 30,000ft, where it might have been propelled by jet streams travelling up to 200mph. A Met Office official was sceptical. "An ordinary party balloon would almost certainly be unable to withstand heights of 30,000ft, where it would expand several times", he said. The longest reported journey by a helium-filled toy balloon is 10,000 miles, from Dobbs Ferry, New York, to Wagga Wagga, Australia, in 1982. *D.Mail, 6 July 1993.*

SIMULACRA CORNER

Like something from the *Hellraiser* films, two strange faces – like bizarre human masks set into a triangular plate of bone – were dredged up by startled fishermen trawling for sole off Newfoundland's Cape St George in October 1980. Measuring 32cm from top to bottom and 29cm across, they puzzled many, and it being just before Hallowe'en, disturbed them too. "It's not plastic, or carved, or wood," said Sgt Lorne Goode of the Mounties. "I've checked with local fishermen and they haven't seen anything like them. They say it's not a fish, and they're definitely not human." Later, the bones were positively identified by John Maunder, curator of Natural History at the museum in St Johns, as "merely the skulls of bluefin tuna, viewed from above".

We are always glad to receive pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images or scenes. If you have one, send it to the editorial address – with SAE – and we'll pay a fiver for any we use.



CRAPSICLE MISSES COP

Southend's top policeman narrowly escaped injury when a huge lump of green ice plummeted through the roof of his house on 12 July 1993. Chief Supt. Michael Benning, 46, was woken when the icy missile hit a metal support joist in the attic above his bedroom. "The sound was something like a loud explosion ... The ice shattered into pieces when it hit the joist. Had it been just a few inches over it could have smashed through to the rest of the house."

The immediate assumption of victim and reporter was that the ice had fallen from an aeroplane's leaky chemical toilet, so Mr Benning was said to be waiting for aviation investigators to find the flying culprit. It's our prediction that, despite his authority, he'll have a long wait. To our knowledge, no airline has ever admitted liability for any fall of ice. *Leicester Mercury, 13 July; Southend Standard Recorder, 15 July 1993.*

INDIAN TRAGEDY

A contemporary version of *Romeo and Juliet* played out in Andra Pradesh state in Southern India this year. A village astrologer told Subba Rao, 20, and his bride Nagalakshmi, 18 (or maybe 14), that although they were married they had to wait more than six months, 'until the stars were auspicious on 16 September', before they could have sex.

With a month to go, the overheated Rao feigned suicide by smearing granules of pesticide on his lips in order to make his bride's family relent and allow them to make love. He was dragged off to the nearest clinic in Sattupalli, six miles away, and was discharged in perfect health in the evening.

Believing her husband was dying, the besotted Nagalakshmi swallowed the remaining pesticide and her family rushed her to the Sattupalli clinic as her husband was returning by bus. By the time they arrived, the doctor in charge had left - to attend a wedding. The pesticide proved fatal. *Independent, 24 Aug 1993.*

NOT YOU AGAIN!

Anna Hascher, 82, had been on crutches since she was knocked down in Vienna in 1983 by minibus driver Milance Zivojinovic. On 21 May 1993, Anna was hobbling across the street about 500 yards from the site of the earlier accident when she was knocked down again by Zivojinovic, this time with a truck. He told police he didn't see the old lady until it was too late. Her left leg was crushed and had to be amputated. *National Enquirer, 14 July 1993.* Curiously, an earlier report *(D. Mirror, 25 May)* names the victim as 'Maria Schmidt'.

● A driver who lost control of his truck and crashed into a house in Salvador, Brazil, in 1966, did it again 23 years later, on 6 November 1989. Cristina Costa said outside her demolished home: "I opened the door and said 'Not you again!'". *Sandwell Express & Star, 8 Nov 1989.*

POSTBOX PERILS

The village of Chinnor in Oxfordshire has been plagued for six years by someone who rings doorbells at night and runs away. After some of his victims disconnected their doorbells, he prowled the village with tape recordings of a range of door bells and barking dogs which he blasted through letter boxes. Most of his victims were elderly women living alone.

● A late night stroller in Wrexham, Clwyd, was shocked to hear cries for help coming from a post box outside the sorting office in Regent Street. A middle-aged mailman had been collecting late deliveries 20 minutes earlier from the large post box when a gust of wind blew the door shut behind him. A GPO worker had been trapped in the same post box 25 years earlier. *D.Telegraph, 12 Nov; Wrexham Eve. Leader, 23 Nov 1992.*

Two American brains survive bullseye projectiles:

1. MOUNTAIN MAN MISSES THE MARK

Anthony Roberts, 25, an unemployed carpenter from Oregon, wished to join a rafting and outdoor group called Mountain Men Anonymous. On 1 May he was drinking at his friend Michael Kennedy's house in Grant's Pass, about 200 miles south of Portland, when he agreed to an initiation rite into the group, which involved having a gallon fuel can shot from his head with a crossbow arrow. Kennedy missed his mark, as can be seen from these photographs. He was perhaps the worse for drink - one report said that both men had downed 16 pints of beer.

Paramedics saved Roberts's life by restraining him when he tried to pull the aluminium arrow out while being taken to hospital by helicopter. "If he had succeeded", said neurosurgeon Johnny B. Delashaw, "the flanges slicing through his brain would have killed him instantly." Delashaw's surgical team at University Hospital in Portland spent 12 hours removing the arrow by drilling a larger hole around the tip at the back of his skull and pulling it slowly through. He lost his right eye and partial vision in his left eye, but suffered no brain damage. He was able to leave hospital after a few days, fitted with a glass eye. "I feel really stupid", he said.

If the arrow had been a millimetre closer to his nose, it would have fatally severed major blood vessels.

Anthony Roberts recovering in hospital after being shot through the eye.

"I've never seen anything like it", said Delashaw. "The arrow went through eight to 10 inches of brain, with the tip protruding from the rear of the skull."

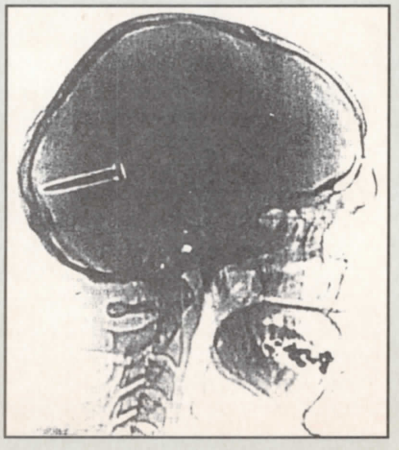
We hope Roberts has earned his membership of Mountain Men Anonymous. "I don't think that's a good initiation", he said. "I think a hug would be better." Kennedy was not charged with any offence. *Oregonian, 5 May; [AP, Reuters] 6 May; Daily Record, 7 May 1993.*

An X–ray picture showing the arrow lodged in Roberts's skull

2. NAILED

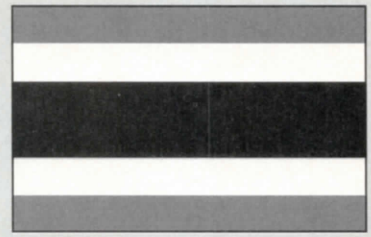
Earlier this year, a 'stuporous, inebriated man' was admitted to the Massachusetts General Hospital. Examination revealed a mild right hemiparesis (a weakness of the muscles on the right side of the body, in other words, 'a mild stroke'). Dr Michael Schwarzschild gave him a routine computed tomographic scan (shown right), which revealed a one-inch nail stuck in the man's brain near the back of his skull.

The patient later admitted that, during a depressive episode 12 years earlier, he had attempted suicide by firing a carpenter's nail gun between his eyes. Miraculously, the nail went through his brain from front to back without killing him, and the only symptoms he has now are a slight limp and a right-sided facial droop. *New England Journal of Medicine, 4 Mar; New Scientist, 25 Mar 1993.*



SIAMESE SUNDRIES

Our national page this issue is devoted to various odd goings-on in Thailand



METEORITE RETURNED

Soon after a 37lb meteorite fell near Khamla Rakkorn's house in Phetchabun Province, Thailand, on 13 June, neighbours built a shrine of bamboo, incense sticks and flowers around the crater. Crowds started visiting the 10in x 6in rock, thinking it was a sacred object with special powers. One newspaper account said people bought lottery tickets with numbers they thought they saw in the meteorite. A merchant offered the equivalent of US$400,000 for the rock, but Khamla, 55, didn't want to sell it.

Four days later, the authorities seized it, saying that what falls from the sky belongs to the state. Khamla shut herself in a room and stopped eating and talking. Villagers marched in protest, demanding the meteorite's return.

Interior Ministry legal experts ruled on 22 July that the rock was an extraterrestrial object, not a natural resource or buried artifact, and therefore not state property. "It is like a cloud or the moon, which cannot be taken for commercial value", they said, according to the *Bangkok Post's* ministry source. The grey stone was handed back on a red cloth-covered platter by the deputy governor of Phetchabun on 5 August. *FT70:13; [AP] 24 June; [Reuters] 22 July; Victoria Times-Colonist, 6 Aug 1993.*

SPIRIT SNATCHERS

Villagers in Long district, Phrae province, northern Thailand, became disturbed in June 1993 when over two dozen old people died in quick succession. Unease turned to alarm after stories spread that a pickup truck without a driver roared into town before the spate of deaths.

"There was a pickup truck from far away with old people and teenagers in it, and then someone walked from it into a village lane to ask if there were any elderly people in the area", one old woman told TV Channel 9. "Someone said there were many old people around, and soon thereafter they started dying." Villagers festooned their homes with banners that claim, in the local Lanna dialect as well as in Thai: "This house does not have any old people". Not every villager thought the old people died of supernatural causes. "They were elderly people who had been sick for a long time", said one sceptic.

More supposedly healthy people died in September in Thainmee in the north-east province of Surin, prompting fears that the village had been invaded by *pee paob* (living dead), who take over human bodies and kill and eat other people, including internal organs. Villagers placed human-sized straw dolls with faces like demons outside their houses and strung 'sacred string' around the village. Buddhist monks were also invited to perform exorcism rites. *Bangkok Post, 13 July; Bangkok Nation, 9 Oct 1993.*

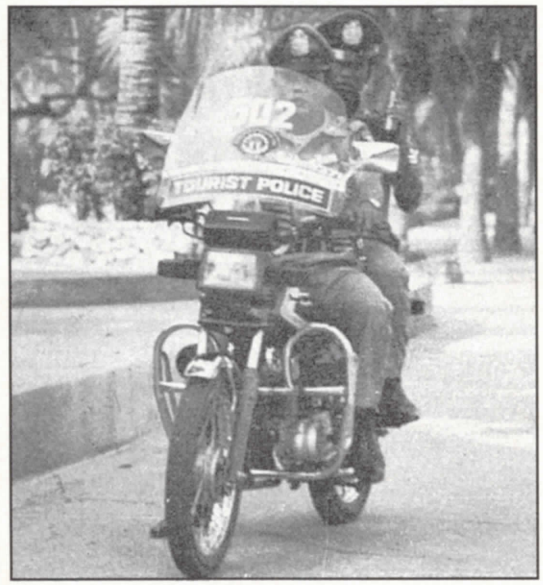
SPIRITS BLAMED FOR FIRE

The fire in the Kader Industrial Company plant near Bangkok on 10 May which killed 200 workers was possibly the worst factory fire in history. Thailand's mass-circulation daily *Thai Rath* claimed the fire happened because the factory had been built on the site of a cemetery without any attempt to appease the spirits.

Mr Saengchaliao Sipeung, 41, headman of a village near the factory, said four workers had been possessed by spirits since 1990. One of the four told others she wanted to take the lives of 200 workers. A medium told him the possessions and accidents occurred because the owners failed to build small ceremonial houses for the spirits. *D.Telegraph, 14 May 1993.*

SCIENCE IN ACTION

The Thai minister for science and technology had a distinctly un-western explanation for how he escaped an assassin's bullet. Mr Phisan Moonlasartsathorn, advisor to the Buddhist Image Club of Thailand, said that the 'magnetic field' of an amulet he wears 'deflected the bullet', which missed his head by a centimetre. The amulet had 'invisible power' by virtue of 'natural science'. *Guardian, 8 April 1993.*



***NIPPLE SQUAD:** Thai Tourist Police race to the scene of the incident*

BANGKOK STING

A gang of transvestites robbed tourists by enticing them to suck their tranquilliser-laced nipples and thus putting them to sleep, according to the Bangkok police. They were told the ploy was adopted because "many customers did not drink". Those tranquillisers must be damned strong!

Four transvestites and a woman were arrested after complaints from a Syrian and a Hong Kong man, who said they were robbed of a Rolex watch and nearly £2,000 in cash. *[Reuters] 29 Dec 1992.*

Sidelines

The *Birmingham News* in Alabama has published on its front page the results of a Baptist poll which shows that 46.1% of the state's population are heading straight for hell. It included a map showing which areas had the greatest concentrations of lost souls. *Independent on Sunday, 19 Sept 1993.*

Because friends bet him £5 it couldn't be done, Pedro Guattero rolled a watermelon for 220 miles through the streets of Vera Cruz, Mexico. "It was a matter of honour", he said. *People, 25 July 1993.*

Nearly 500 pigs were blown up or burned to death in Granada, Spain, when an electrical short circuit ignited methane gas produced by their dung. *[Reuters] 21 Aug 1993.*

Chinese health authorities have discovered a 30-something woman in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, who likes rubber so much she has eaten more than 800 rubber nipples for baby feeding bottles since 1990. All the family like the smell of rubber, and her younger brother is fond of eating rubber bands. *[Reuters] 17 Aug. 1993.*

Actor Gareth Gilchrist, 32, was flying home from Edinburgh to play Caithness in a production of Macbeth at the Bristol Old Vic when the X-ray scanner picked up a flick knife. He was arrested by WPC Heather McBeth, who said "Is this a dagger I see before me?" (so the press assured us). Gilchrist said it was a prop, but was fined £150. *Western Daily Press, 23 Aug 1993.*

FINAL CURTAIN:24 NOVEMBER

Maria Devi Christos

An extreme millennial cult called Belye Bratya ('White Brothers'), led by Maria Devi Christos, self-styled Final Incarnation of God on Earth, has declared that the world will end on 24 November, about the time this *Fortean Times* goes on sale. The cult is banned in Ukraine and Belarus, but claims to have 144,000 devotees, who are forbidden money, television, computers, jobs and education. The White Brothers are violently opposed to bar codes, in which they see the Mark of the Beast. (The only constant feature in bar codes are three sets of delimiters, two thin stripes longer than the others, representing the number six, hence 666, fulfilling *Revelations 13:7:* "...no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." It's hard to think of a more effective way for Satan to conquer than to control the world's shopping habits. (See ***FT62:13***).)

Thousands of posters of Maria Christos were plastered over the walls of St Petersburg in the summer. Texts exhorted readers to denounce the devil and his monetary system, confess and pray to Maria. Little is known about Maria, except that she studied journalism, lived in Kiev and saw the light in 1990, aged 30. Various groups have been formed to counter the influence of the cult, which lures teenagers away from families and schools. *St Petersburg Press, 24-30 Aug 1993.*

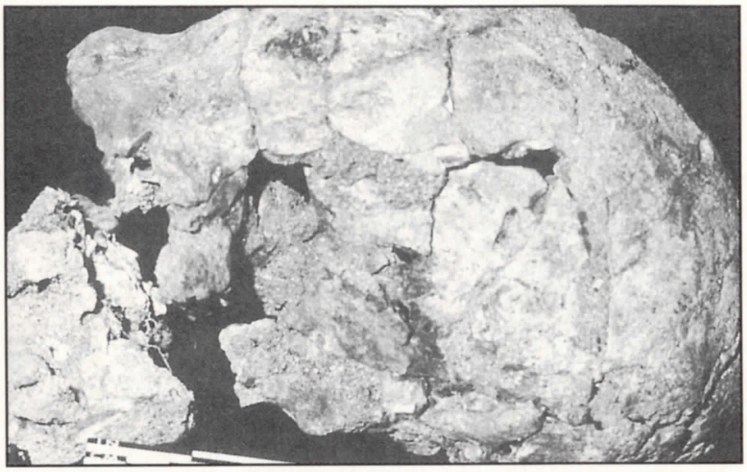
HORSE LOVER

Hanibal Cantori, a horse trainer in a Bucharest circus, went to the stable to give sugar to his stallion, Galbenus, and discovered his wife Laura copulating with the animal.

She confessed to seeking regular satisfaction in this way, whereupon Hanibal strangled her with a silk scarf before committing suicide. The report in the Romanian paper *Dracula* (1 June 1993) concludes: "Now the stallion is on tour in Holland. Desire glows in his eyes. He still waits for the beautiful Laura in his stable."

Our picture shows Laura, apparently in bridal gown, riding Galbenus. *Dracula* also published a voyeuristic photograph of the naked, strangled Laura which shows how far the Romanian press has come since the demise of Ceausescu.

A CONTENTIOUS NEW SKULL



It was an unintended coincidence that *FT70* - containing Pat Shipton's account of the village in Java specialising in faked *Homo erectus* skulls and other antiquities - was published very close to the centenary of Eugene Dubois' original discoveries of *Homo erectus* remains on Java. Inured as we are to quirky coincidences, a more splendid one was in the making.

As *FT70* was going to press, news came of a special announcement of the discovery of "the oldest fossil East Asian skull" of the *Homo erectus* type. Not only was it found on the anniversary of Dubois' discovery, according to the media, but it was found near Sangiran, a village mentioned by Shipton, that has a special market for forged antiquities.

We decided to check some of the details with Dr John de Vos, curator of the Dubois Collection at the Netherland's National Museum of Natural History in Leiden, which provided the venue for the special announcement.

Old bones

It seems that while Don Tyler, professor of anthropology at the University of Idaho, was surveying a site near Sangiran in May 1993, a farmer brought him some skull fragments which he had found recently in his field. Tyler went to the field with students from Indonesia's Bandung Institute, and recovered more bones. Under the direction of Sastrohamijoyo Sartono, a professor of anthropology at the Bandung Institute, the students studied the fossil skull – **pictured above** – and announced that they were of a woman who lived in the Sangiran area between 1.2 and 1.5 million years ago.

Tyler and Sartono were invited to Leiden to present formally what one spokesman described as "one of the most spectacular finds in palæoanthropology outside the African continent". The presentation went well until, during the press session afterwards, Sartono suddenly revised the age of the relics. His students had been wrong, he said – the skull was much younger; between 500 and 700,000 years old. His hosts and colleagues were taken aback when he added that he had not read the paper just presented and wanted to remove his name from it.

Unanswered questions

Tyler's own conclusion was that the age and morphology of the skull was strikingly similar to *erectus* skulls from Africa, and therefore its owner had arrived in Java earlier than previous estimates. Tyler also appeared to contradict this claim by accepting Prof Sartono's revised dates, at which point the meeting broke up in some confusion, leaving many questions still unanswered.

Dr de Vos, meanwhile, is in no doubt that the new Sangiran skull is genuine and sees nothing suspicious in its discovery. "Farmers are always turning up fossils there," he told us. It seems inconceivable to think that someone might have planted a genuine African *erectus* skull at Sangiran as a joke, because any such African skull would itself be famous and incredibly valuable. Dr de Vos also disabused us of the coincidence idea too: the anniversary of Dubois' discovery was chosen simply because it was an appropriate time for the announcement.

Sidelines

A dead woman was called for jury service at the trial of the man accused of her murder. Staff at Blenheim High Court in New Zealand said that the name of Ann Urquhart, whose body has never been found, was among a random selection from the electoral roll. *D.Star, 25 May 1993.*

A young mother was charged with sexual abuse and jailed in Syracuse, NY, after asking innocently if it was normal to experience arousal while nursing her child. *Washington Post, 30 Dec 1992.*

Tribesman Simphiwe Khosa was cleared by a court in Johannesburg of possessing 80lb of marijuana after he told the judge it was for burning during thunderstorms – to ward off lightning. *People, 27 June 1993.*

Last May, Randy Kraft, on death row for the sexual torture-murder of 16 men, sued Warner Books and Dennis McDougal for $60 million, arguing that their book *Angel of Darkness* was unfair in its portrayal of him as a 'sick, twisted' man. *Los Angeles Reader, 23 July 1993.*

KCAL in Los Angeles, a TV station owned by Walt Disney, the studio which boasts that it was built by a mouse, is plagued by mice which frighten reporters, gnaw through cables and invade storerooms. *D.Mail, 16 Aug 1993.*

Police in Tokyo arrested three men for selling used schoolgirl panties (price: £18 each) from vending machines in the suburbs without an official permit. *[Reuters] 22 Sept 1993.*

FORGET ME NOT

Drivers seem to have become very absent-minded recently...

According to an AP item from 12 May 1992, a couple were driving from Delaware home to Colorado, and the husband left his wife by mistake in Rostraver Township (western Pennsylvania). It took the man four hours to realise his mistake, whereupon he headed back to Pennsylvania... but hit a deer just west of Wheeling, West Virginia, and disabled the van. He walked to the nearest truck stop and told police his problem. State troopers in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio drove his wife in shifts to the truck stop, where the two were reunited.

Later that summer, a husband drove for six hours, arriving home near Milan, before realising he'd left his wife at a motorway service cafe 450 miles back. He told police that his wife normally sat in the back and talked non-stop. "I never listened to her, so I didn't notice she wasn't with me". *D.Mirror, 27 Aug 1992.*

Norwegian motorist Lars Thongruen, 35, noticed he had left his wife behind at a gas station after only 30 miles, but he couldn't remember where the gas station was. When he arrived home, she was waiting for him, having hitched a lift. "I didn't miss her because she's not a big talker" he said. *Wolverhampton Express & Star, 4 Jan 1993.*

A French tourist drove 200 miles before realising he had left his wife at a motorway service station. The 32-year-old stopped off the M6 near Carlisle for a wash, but set off again, not noticing his wife had nipped to the loo. He returned eight hours later, after a 400-mile round trip to Birmingham. He thought she was asleep in the caravanette. *Most papers, 17 April 1993.*

According to a Dutch press report on 16 August, a British tourist travelling around Austria left his wife by mistake on the Italian/ Austrian border after she went to the lavatory. He didn't realise his mistake until he reached the Austro-German border 150km away. The same mistake was made by a visitor to Bodmin, Cornwall, a few days later. He drove 20 miles before returning for the wife he left in the lavatory. *D.Mirror, 24 Aug 1993.*

In an item from the *Middlesbrough Evening Gazette* (21 Dec 1992), it's the driver's mother rather than his wife who is left in the service station. This one is set in New South Wales; mother had been asleep in the back of the car and got out for a spot of nocturnal urination. Police caught up with the son after 30 miles.

Sometimes the forgotten party is a child. On 21 June, Charles and Marjorie Miller left their daughter Kimberley (14) at a rest stop in eastern Oregon on the way to a holiday in Minnesota. They thought she was asleep in their motor home and didn't realise she was missing until pulled over by a state trooper 150 miles away in Baker City. Morrow County Sheriff Roy Drago said that in the previous year there had been four or five similar occurrences in the county. *San Jose (CA) Mercury News, 24 June 1993.*

Thomas Brown was driving to the seaside at Totnes in Devon with his wife Catherine in their Skoda on 29 August 1993. The clutch burned out on the M5 at Clevedon, near Bristol. Mr Brown, a retired rail worker of 73, parked on the hard shoulder and hobbled off on his two walking sticks to seek help. Five hours later, police found Mrs Brown, 84, sitting in the Skoda on the hard shoulder. Her husband had taken a bus to Bristol and a train home to Tewkesbury, 70 miles away. "I suppose I must have got confused", he said. "I was very surprised when the police turned up." *People, 30 Aug; D.Telegraph, D.Mirror, 31 Aug 1992.*

On the evening of 13 September, a 65-year-old Dutch tourist and his wife arrived at the municipal car park in Coppice Street, Shaftsbury, on their way to a holiday in Cornwall. In the morning he left his wife in the caravan and drove to a business meeting 50 miles away, in Swindon. He scribbled down 'Coppice Street', but failed to note the name of the town. He spent the whole day going up and down west Country roads, driving as far west as Exeter, and eventually seeking help in broken English from police in Salisbury. It took two hours' research to locate the right Coppice Street. *D.Telegraph, 17 Sept 1993.*

It seems very odd to us that all these (broadly similar) tales should come from the last 16 months, and none from earlier years. The only precedent that we know of took the form of a Max Bygraves joke about 30 years ago. Perhaps recent months have been earmarked by the cosmic joker as passenger-forgetting time. The alternative – that reality copies old Max Bygraves jokes – is too horrible to contemplate.

SLAM BAM

The odds against being dealt a perfect hand in bridge are 158,753,389,899 to 1; this has not happened in 60 years of professional tournaments, but amateurs seems to have more luck. William McNall got all the hearts in Gateshead in March 1992, as did Pat Lambert in Ludham, Norfolk, in October 1992.

Marcus Benorthan got all the spades in Elburton, near Plymouth, in May 1993. Mr Benorthan, a bridge teacher and retired newsagent, was competing at home with his wife Phyllis and another couple. The cards had been well shuffled by Phyllis, cut by her partner Ann Blades and dealt by his partner Brian Blades. The odds quoted by most papers in reporting this event – two thousand million million million million or so to one – were against *all four* players being dealt a perfect hand.

Retired GP Bernard Samuels, 70, got all the clubs in Southport, Merseyside, in August 1993. Gertrude Lutchner shuffled the cards, Bernard cut them and Joe Lutchner dealt them. Raymond Brock, general manager of the English Bridge Union, said (absurdly): "These hands seem to be coming up more often than they should". Of course, it's all in the eye of the beholder: we decide what counts as a significant pattern. Whatever hand one is dealt, the odds against it are astronomical. *FT65:6; Eastern Daily Press, 29 Oct 1992; most UK nationals, 12 May; D.Mail, 28 Aug 1993.*

IT'S A MIRACLE?

Hundreds of people testified to cures effected by the 'holy water' sold by a pedlar in Mexico City. When he was arrested, he told police that he drew the water from a local well and added a drop of home-made tequila.

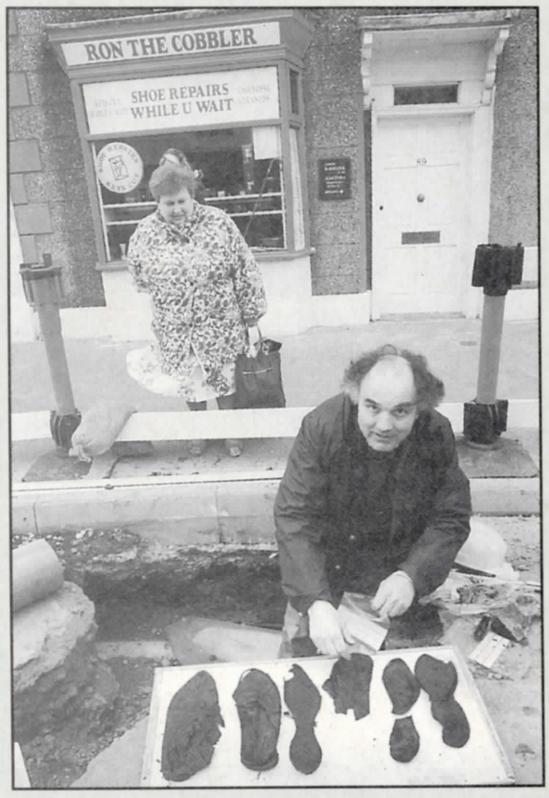
Perhaps hooch wasn't the only active ingredient in Mexico's 'holy water'. It's fame spread to Argentina, where health ministry officials issued a ban on its importation on the grounds that it was untreated water from a cholera area. It's a miracle those folks in Mexico City hadn't swapped their arthritis and athletes' foot for something more fatal! *Eastern Daily Press, Sussex Eve.Argus, 18 Aug; People, 29 Aug 1993.*

WILD HUMANS SAVAGE DOG WARDEN

Early on the morning of 16 July, families living in the Withywood area of Bristol complained to the police about a terrier roaming the streets. A dog warden spotted the animal in Piggott Avenue at 8am and put it in his van, whereupon two men and two women ran up demanding that he free it.

One smashed all the van's windows and released the dog, while the others pinned the warden to the ground, assaulted him with a plank of wood and began biting him before neighbours could come to the rescue. There was blood pouring from his neck. The unnamed warden was treated in hospital for bites to neck, arms and legs. Three people in their 20s were being questioned by police. *Western Daily Press, 17 July 1993.*

OLD COBBLERS



One of Wales's earliest and largest footwear hoards - hundreds of pairs of 13th century boots, lace-up shoes, moccasins and sandals - has been found buried in six feet of mud in Monnow Street, Monmouth, by drainage contractors working for Gwent County Council. Most curiously, the find was made right outside Ron the Cobbler's shop. The picture shows the appropriately named Stephen Clarke, chairman of Monmouth Archæological Society, examining some of the finds.

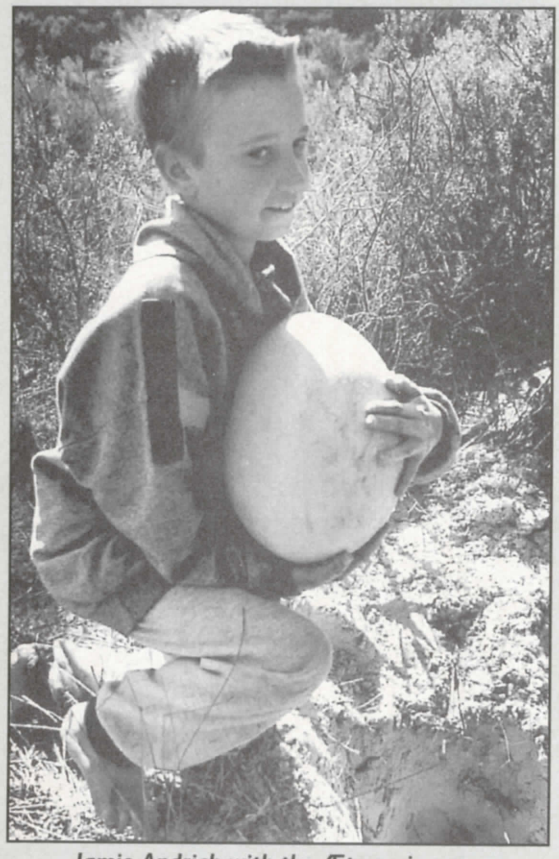
ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY JEWELLERY

When jewellery-chain chief Gerald Ratner said that some of the products sold in his stores were 'crap', he can hardly have anticipated the latest ecologically sound novelties from Sweden and Japan.

Horst Keuhne, the tourist office manager from Hede in northern Sweden who last year had a brisk trade in bottled moose droppings, is now offering varnished moose-turd earrings. "I'm really amazed at the demand", he said. In this value-added form, he is shifting the shit for £180 per kilo.

Meanwhile the Tokyo Metropolitan Sewerage Bureau has been producing a range of Sludge Jewellery including pendants, earrings and tie pins from dehydrated human waste at the Minamitama Treatment Plant. At very high temperatures, the organic matter burns off, leaving inorganic matter which solidifies. The slag is known as 'metro marble' and, when mixed with other materials, is used to make road-bed, bricks, vases and name-cards. *Sydsvenska Dagbladet, 22 July; Aftonbladet, 23 July 1993; D.Telegraph, 13 Nov 1992.*

EGG SCRAMBLE



Jamie Andrich with the Æpyornis egg

On 19 July, scientists announced that a 31.7in circumference beige fossilised egg with its 12.8 pint capacity, discovered at Cervantes on the Australian coast north of Perth *[**FT70:44**]*, was undoubtedly laid by the elephant bird of Madagascar *(Aepyornis maximus)* about 2,000 years ago, and not by a prehistoric giant emu. The carbon-dating was said to be accurate to within 150 years. *Aepyornis* is thought to have become extinct 800 years ago.

Many speculated that the egg floated across the 4,600 miles of ocean from Madagascar, but Dr Patricia Rich of Monash University, Melbourne, doubted this as there were no signs of barnacles or other marine organisms. "It's likely that it came off a shipwreck", she said. "The eggs were traded as curiosity items during the 19th century."

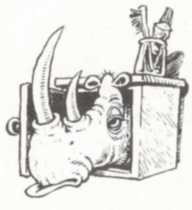
In August, a collector offered £70,000 for the egg; the Andrich family informed the Government of Western Australia, whereupon Arts Minister Peter Foss wrote to them, trying to poach the egg on behalf of the Government and accusing them of breaching the Land Act by digging it up, as the beach was state property. Foss offered a paltry 'finders' fee' of £11,000. Jamie Andrich, nine, and his cousins Kelly and Michelle Rew (not Pew), were naturally peeved; Jamie promptly re-buried it somewhere in the dunes on 28 August. Within six days, the Government agreed to raise funds to match the offer and pay the finders, by charging admission to see the egg in Perth. *[Reuters] 19 July; D.Telegraph, 20 July + 2 Sept; Brisbane Courier Mail, 2 Sept 1993.*

NEW MAMMAL

DNA tests on 11 specimens from over 20 skulls, horns, hides and teeth, including three complete skins, found by Dr John MacKinnon in Vu Quang nature reserve in Vietnam in 1992 (see ***FT66:6***) have confirmed that they belonged to a mammal unlike any in the bovid family. It's the first large, new mammal to be identified since a type of wild Cambodian cow in 1937, and MacKinnon has called it *Pseudoryx nghetinhensis.* It is a cow-like creature with the glossy coat of a horse, the agility of a goat and the long horns of an antelope. The local peasants call it the 'forest goat' or the 'spindle horn'. It has a deep brown coat with black and white markings, dainty hooves and sharp, straight horns about 20in long. It weighs about 220 pounds. No-one, except perhaps local trappers, has seen a living specimen of the spindle horn. *New York Times, 8 June 1993.*

What could be the last population of one of Asia's rarest monkeys, the Tenkin snub-nosed langur, has been found living among jagged limestone cliffs and patches of forest in northern Vietnam. The two-foot-long, black-and-white monkeys were found near the village of Na Hang in Tuyen Qang province. *[AP] 29 Mar 1993.*

A GRIZZLY SIGHT



The swimming pool at the expensive Ritz Carlton Hotel in Aspen, Colorado, closes at ten in the evening and no-one is allowed to use the pool after hours. In late May, one swimmer went for a pre-dawn dip, ignoring the signs. The following morning, as staff reviewed security camera videotapes, they saw a bear enter the pool at 3:40am, swim for about 12 minutes, climb out and saunter off. It left a trail of bloody tracks, the result of a minor foot injury sustained before it entered the hotel grounds. *San Jose (CA) Mercury News, 25 June 1993.*

ALIEN STING

People eavesdropping on police radio broadcasts heard an emergency message about a flying saucer crash in a field at Appleton, Cheshire, and a warning about radioactivity from the burning spaceship. Five people raced to the scene and were promptly arrested by little blue men who charged them with telecommunication offences. Scanning devices are legally available to the public, but using them to listen to police transmissions is an offence. *Guardian, Times, 23 Mar 1993.*

HOLD TIGHT

A crewman on the Spanish yacht Galicia, training for the Whitbread round-the-world race, had his hand sliced off in an accident in The Solent off the Isle of Wight on 3 August. He was coiling a halyard when a jammer device broke and the wire whipped onto his arm. His colleagues recovered the hand from the boat, still clutching a Cadbury's Flake chocolate bar, and packed it in ice. The 27-year-old Spaniard was airlifted to Salisbury, where the hand was sewn back on. The chances that it would be functional again were thought to be good. *Today, D.Telegraph, 4 Aug 1993.*

IT'S RAINING MEN

A round-up of recent falls from the sky – from the mysterious to the lucky

Denise Buisson, 63, was on the telephone in her house in the Paris suburb of Eaubonne at about 11:30am on 8 July when she heard "a noise like two cars colliding" and the line went dead. She went upstairs and saw that tree branches were broken and telephone wires torn down. The body of a man had fallen in her garden, making a six-inch dent in the lawn. The man was lightly dressed and his swarthy complexion suggested he was Armenian. All he carried was three obsolete Russian banknotes, amounting to 55 roubles.

At first the police said he had stowed away in the undercarriage of an airliner where he had frozen to death and fallen out as the wheel doors opened in preparation for landing at nearby Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport. (Two suspected illegal immigrants had fallen on to French airport runways in the last six months, both from flights from Africa.) Then investigator Jean-Paul Simmonot discovered that the man was certainly alive when he hit the ground. If he had hidden in the undercarriage, he must then have survived several hours at 36,000 feet where the temperature drops to minus 45 degrees Celsius, which was thought to be a medical impossibility. The average person freezes to death after ten minutes at this temperature. So, did he fall, or was he pushed?

According to our information, neither the man nor the aircraft have been identified. About a dozen possible candidates for the plane, given the time-frame, include flights from Moscow, Rome, Geneva, Milan, Dublin and several from the Middle East. One suspicion was that the outdated roubles were a plant by assassins from the Middle East to throw the investigation off course. We await developments.

Eight days after the plummeting Armenian, on 16 July, a man (believed to be Nigerian) was found frozen to death in the landing gear of an Air France Boeing 747 flying from Libreville, Gabon, to Paris. It was thought he had stowed away during a stop-over in Lagos.

On the very same day, love-struck Mohammed Shamim, 17, fell to his death 100 feet beyond the tarmac of Fiji's main airport at Nasdi. He had stowed away in the undercarriage of an aircraft which was carrying his girlfriend Kurisha back to her family in England. The body was not found for six days. *[AFP], Guardian, D.Telegraph, 10 July; European, 15-18 July; [Reuters] 20+22 July 1993.*

Klint Freemantle, 22, of Napier, New Zealand, fell nearly 3,600 feet above Napier airport on 31 July when his main and reserve parachutes became entangled. Then, as relatives looked on in horror, he landed in a three-foot-deep pond sending ducks scattering and clambered out with only a slight cut over one eye. "I leaned back and undid my harness", said Klint. "If I was going to survive by hitting the water there was no way I was going to drown. I splashed down before I thought I would. The first thing I did was stand up and shout 'Yes!', then I reeled the chute in." He said he would be back skydiving as soon as his knees stopped trembling. *Western Morning News, D.Telegraph, 10 Aug 1993.*

Six months earlier, novice skydiver Clark Manning, 43, from Oklahoma City, survived an identical accident, falling 3,500 feet and landing in two feet of water. *People, 14 Feb 1993.*

A 45-year-old resident of Bnai Brak in Israel tried to commit suicide by leaping from a pedestrian footbridge onto a busy highway during the height of midday rush hour. He landed on a truckload of mattresses and suffered only minor bruises. *The Jewish Week, 12-18 Feb 1993.*

On 1 April, Chris Saggers, 26, plunged 220 feet from a tower block in Greater Manchester – Fitzwarren Court in Salford. His 22-floor fall, at an estimated 80mph, was captured on security video. He landed on the roof of a Nissan Micra car, which completely caved in, and after 15 seconds walked away, telling passer-by Paul Eardley he felt 'fine'. He was later treated for cuts, a neck injury and a suspected broken elbow. He said he was not trying to commit suicide, but tripped on the stairs and fell out of a window. *Most British papers, 2-4 April 1993.*

Michael Afilaka's sagging Nissan Micra car after Chris Saggers had fallen on it from 220 feet.

SNACK ATTACKS

● During the Moorish occupation, the pig became a symbol of political and religious resistance for Christian Spaniards. In a new prize-winning film, *Jamon Jamon* (Ham Ham), the pig – in the form of ham – looms large as a metaphor for Spanish society. At its violent climax, two rivals in a love triangle club each other with legs of ham until one falls dead in the sand. *Victoria (BC) Times-Colonist, 16 Jan 1993.*

● Catherine Deck killed her husband Alain after a heated row at their home in Lyon. She smacked him in the face with a giant cucumber. *Scottish Sunday Mail, 28 Mar 1993.*

● A robber staged hold-ups at a Manchester bank and three building societies, armed with two cucumbers taped together like a double-barrelled shotgun. He netted £5,000 in 20 minutes, but was arrested in a taxi after a helicopter chase. *Sun, 26 Aug 1992.*

● Thieves smashed their way into a pub at Dawlish, Devon, using a frozen rabbit as a battering ram and then left it on the bar to thaw out. *Sunday Mirror, 30 Aug; Sun, 3 Sept 1992.*

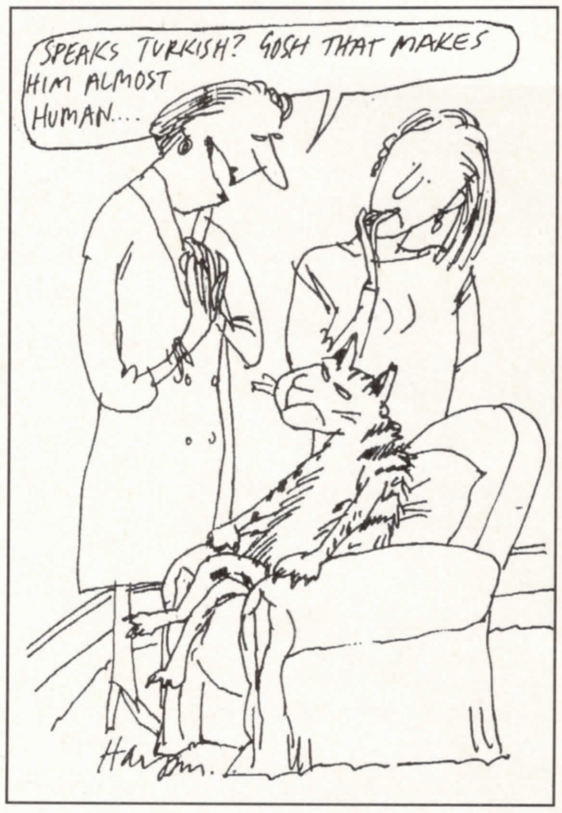
● A robber armed with a sausage raided a shop in Graz, Austria, and escaped with £1,000. Storekeeper Rudy Buckmeister was hit over the head with the ten pound wurst. "It felt like a baseball bat", he said. *Scottish Daily Record, 25 Aug 1992.*

● Mrs Carol Osbourne, 49, who was working in a mobile cafe near Lewes, Sussex, needed three stitches in her forehead after being hit by a strawberry bonbon thrown from a passing car. Police compared the impact to that of a bullet. *D.Mirror, D.Star, D.Telegraph, 4 Feb 1993.*

● A 56-year-old woman was driving from Gore to Winton in New Zealand on 9 August 1991 when, near Waimunu, a vehicle coming the other way put its lights on full beam. As it passed, a swede was hurled from it. The vegetable bounced off the bonnet, smashed the windscreen and ended up smeared across the back window. Wellington *(NZ) Evening Post, 13 Aug 1991.*

● Retired teacher Ann Mann was hit by an egg hurled from a passing car at Oldland Common near Bristol. Her leg was bruised, but there was no serious injury. Carey Turner, two, was hit in the eye by an egg thrown from a car in Doncaster, South Yorks. He needed five hours in hospital. *Bristol Evening Post, 10 June 1992; D.Star, 26 Feb 1993. [For other flying food, see* ***FT53:14, 57:31.****]*

NOW YOU'RE TALKING



According to FT correspondent Izzet Goksu, the lead story of the Turkish television news on 20 March 1993 was a talking cat called Cingene (Gypsy) belonging to Mrs Ayfer Celik of Izmir. The two-year-old black cat had green eyes and a penchant for cheese and chicken. Cingene managed to say at least seven words on television, including *Ver* (give), *Nalan* (a girl's name), *Derya* (another girl's name), *Demem* (I don't say), *Naynay* (baby talk for music), *Nine* (colloquial word for grandmother) and *Babaanne* (formal word for grandmother). These words, Mr Goksu tells us, were clearly audible. Veterinarians examined the cat and confirmed its ability to talk.

Mrs Celik turned down an offer of 150 million Turkish Liras (about £10,000) for Cingene. She said she had first heard it talk at the age of three months when she was sitting in the waiting room of a local vet. Cingene leapt from her lap to her neck and said '*Annem-Mom*'. Everyone in the room was taken aback.

Perhaps Turkish is the most suitable language for cats. According to the *Exeter Express & Echo* of 17 December 1968, there was a cat called Pala who belonged to a businessman in a Turkish town. Pala was able to say *Anne* (mother), *Baba* (father), *Abla* (elder sister) and *Kamile* (the name of the owner's wife). The cat's gift of human language was authenticated by the chief veterinary surgeon of the (unnamed) town. It occurs to us that perhaps cats all over the world are talking Turkish, and we just don't notice. *Harriyet, Bugün, 27 Mar 1993.*

RIVER SURPRISES

Danger signs have been erected on the banks of the Rhine: 'Beware of the Piranhas'. Shoals have been spotted by people walking along the tow path in Düsseldorf. Angler Claudio Romero, 25, actually caught one. "I just dropped it and ran for my life. This is dangerous. Young children often bathe here." Police blame (without evidence, we suspect) unscrupulous pet shop owners for dumping the Amazonian predators. Shoals are surviving near power stations where the water is warm.

● A small Nile crocodile, a foot long, was found on a barge in the River Main in Frankfurt on 8 September. Where it came from was a mystery. *D.Mail, D.Record, 8 July; D.Telegraph, 9 Sept 1993.*

ASSAULT ON THE BATTERY

An interesting dispute surfaced in the pages of the London *Evening Standard* (10 Aug 1993) between the establishment of battery manufacturers and the forces of consumerism. The focus of attention was a new kind of battery charger which tops up ordinary batteries, which we have all been led to believe are non-rechargeable. Naturally, the big boys are a bit concerned that sales of the more expensive rechargeables will be affected. Behind this is the fear, regularly voiced by conspiracy buffs, that ever-sharp razor blades, eternal light bulbs, perpetual batteries, and other economical products of new technology and inventions would be available now if they didn't threaten manufacturers' profits.

In this case, the 'Battery Manager' is being imported by the Innovations mail-order company, who specialise in such essentials as nostril-hair trimmers. The *Evening Standard* tested one for four days, running standard batteries flat and recharging them up to ten times without noticeable impairment of performance. (Innovations say 20 rechargings are possible.) The only drawback was the slowness of the process.

When the *Evening Standard* asked Ever-Ready for their opinion of the charger, they first said it simply didn't work, but when faced with the *Standard's* findings, said it was dangerous and might make batteries explode. A spokesman for Duracell sniffed: "It goes without saying that our leakage guarantee would be invalid if any attempt was made to recharge normal Duracell batteries."

FISH COUNTER-ATTACK

An eight-foot barracuda hurtled almost 15 foot aboard a houseboat off Islamorada in the Florida Keys on 10 July, slicing into the arm, hip and thigh of Nasine Cloer, 46, during a family fishing trip. Relatives managed to push the fish over the side with boathooks. The school bus driver needed 200 stitches, tendons replaced and skin grafts. The razor-sharp teeth came within a thumb's width of severing an artery in her pelvis, which almost certainly would have been fatal. A day before, tourist Bobby Martin of Jemison, Alabama, needed 24 stitches after a 40-pound barracuda leapt into a boat and bit him near Bradenton. Marine biologist George Burgess of Gainesville had "never even heard of them jumping out of the water". *[AP] 13 July; USA Today, 14 July 1993.*

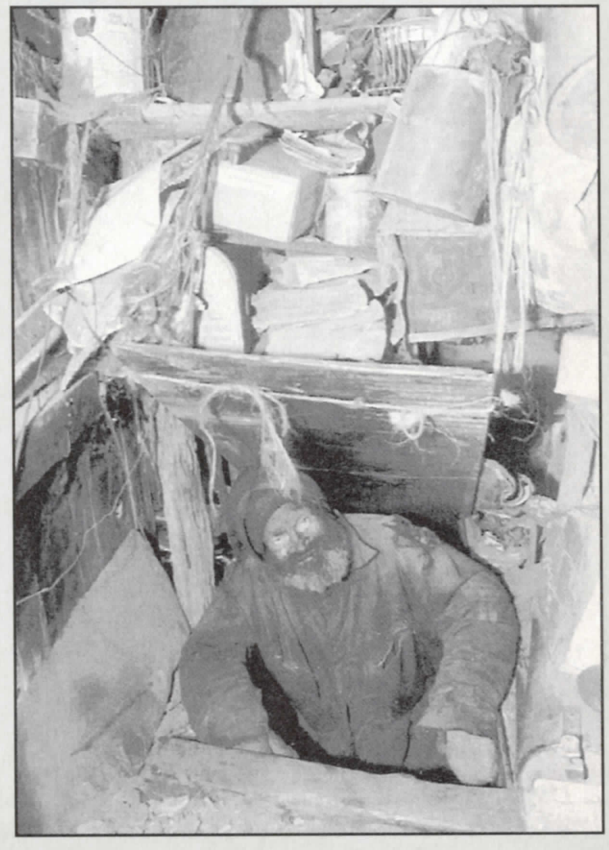
A MODERN CAVEMAN

When fire destroyed Ernest Dittemore's six-room farmhouse 18 years ago, neighbours in Troy, Kansas, pooled their cash to buy the 60-year-old bachelor a trailer house. Grateful, Dittemore filled the trailer with food, then spent the night in a four-by-ten-foot hole he'd dug in the ground with a shovel.

Now, shortly before his 78th birthday, he still descends into the burrow every night, using the trailer just for storage. "I'd been thinking about living underground for quite a while, even before the house burned", he said. "It's a lot easier to heat. I can keep warm and save money on fuel costs."

His nest has earth walls and floor, he sleeps on a bed of newspapers and uses a wood-burning stove for heat. A skylight built into a cement ceiling slab is darkened by soot, but still allows a little light in. There is no electricity or telephone. He's a staunch Republican who never misses an election, and he doesn't care if people think he's odd. Residents of Troy have come to accept his unorthodox lifestyle. Some affectionately call him 'The cave man of Doniphan County'.

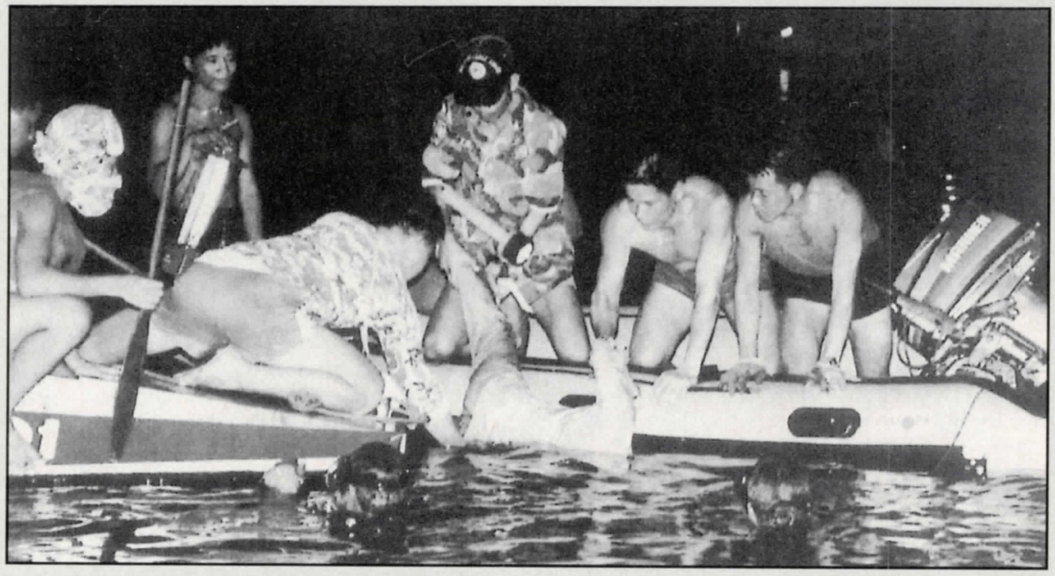
"Ernie is the nicest guy you'll ever meet", said neighbour Jim Gilmore. "One day we'll find him dead in the hole; but he'll die happy." *[AP] 28 Feb 1993.*



Home, sweet home. Ernest Dittemore descends into the hole that has been home for 18 years.

TALES OF DIVINE INGRATITUDE

A four-year-old boy was killed in a Maryland church in May this year, when a statue of the Virgin Mary fell on him. This kind of story seems to us typical of a category we call 'divine ingratitude'. Here are others, collected since our last assembly in FT60:13.



Nearly 300 devotees drowned in the Philippines when three floating shrines overturned on the Bocave River, 3 July 1993.

● **NOV 1991** - Ten people were crushed to death and many others hurt when 2,000 families crowded into the Sidi Ali Boughaleb mausoleum in Fez to watch the annual mass circumcision of thousands of young boys.

● **JAN 1992** - Thirty members of a small Mexican sect were suffocated in their temple in San Luis Potosi state; they believed breathing butane gas in a closed room made them closer to God. They were right!

● **FEB 1992** - A hostel for Hindu pilgrims collapsed during the festival of Mahamaham, held every 12 years in Kumbakonam, in India's Tamil Nadu state, killing 50 and injuring nearly 100. The disaster was triggered by several hundreds of people on balconies craning to watch the state's chief minister, Mr Jayalalitha, bathe in a holy pool at a moment designated by astrologers. (He had specialised in playing Hindu goddesses in films before turning to politics.) In China's eastern Henan province, a bus carrying Buddhist pilgrims on a visit to a holy mountain plunged off a bridge killing 28, injuring 38.

● **MARCH 1992** - Thirty people were overcome by fumes from a faulty boiler in a Catholic social club in Acton, West London. In the Gulf of Thailand, a ferry carrying mainly Chinese Buddhists pilgrims was hit by an oil tanker, drowning 87. In Peckham, London, four African immigrants died in a fire caused by 'prayer candles' as they slept.

● **MAY 1992** - A house full of mourners collapsed killing 81 in Srinagar, India. Sixteen Muslim pilgrims were killed in a bus collision in India's Uttar Pradesh state. In Ada, Oklahoma, a truck ploughed into a funeral procession, killing four.

● **SEPT 1992** - Indian crowds worshipping at a Bombay shrine dedicated to Varuna, god of rain, stampeded during a sudden downpour, trampling 11 to death. A separate but similar crush at a shrine dedicated to Shiva occurred a few days later in Bihar state killing 11 and injuring 17. In Fort Wayne, Indiana, a man was bitten by a poisonous snake during a snake-handling service at the Hi-Way Holiness Church of God.

● **JAN 1993** - A bus carrying mourners to a funeral in northern Thailand collided with another bus killing 18, injuring 20.

● **FEB 1993** - A Russian airliner, chartered to carry Iranian pilgrims from Tehran to the holy city of Mashhad, collided with a military plane, killing 134. At a gathering site for pilgrims in Dhaka, Bangladesh, a water tower collapsed killing 10, injuring 20.

● **MARCH 1993** - In a stampede to reach a holy stream near Mari, in India's northern state of Himachal Pradesh, 12 were killed and 35 injured. In Kashmir, a bus carrying people back to villages to celebrate the end of the Ramadan fast plunged into a ravine killing 38, injuring 18.

● **MAY 1993** - Eleven buses and four cars on their way to the shrine at Fatima, in Portugal, for the anniversary of the 1917 vision of the Virgin Mary, collided in fog, injuring 90.

RUSSIAN ENTERPRISE

A high-tech gang, led by an elusive Russian named 'Serge', have milked a fortune from various corporations on Madison Avenue in New York. Early in 1992, they set up two premium-rate '540' telephone numbers of the kind used by phone-sex lines. These were named 'Get Rich Fast Inc' and 'Work For Yourself Inc.' The gang dispatched fake messengers to pick up packages from reception desks. When told there was no parcel waiting, the 'messenger' asked the receptionist for permission to "call the office to see what is wrong".

He then dialled a '540' number and held a long and involved conversation (in Russian) at a cost of $225 per minute, which charge was automatically transferred by the New York Telephone Company from the business victim to the accounts of 'Get Rich Fast' or 'Work for Yourself'. It was not yet known how much the conmen made altogether, but they withdrew $240,000 in cash before the police discovered the front companies. Only one 'messenger' was arrested. *The European, 8-11 Oct 1992.*

FIJIAN SPECTRE

Security guard Pauliasi Cuanilawa and two colleagues at Fiji's Parliament House in Suva saw on a television monitor what appeared to be the apparition of a faceless Fijian warrior moving around inside a locked refreshment room for about five minutes. The shadowy figure was recorded on videotape and broadcast on Fijian TV on 2 September.

Historians said that the Parliament House was probably built on the site of a village burial ground and that ceremonies might have to be performed to exorcise the *kalouvu* (ancestral spirit). *[AFP] 3 Sept 1993.*

FORTEAN FUNNIES

His quest at an end, Neville cursed the day he decided to trace his ancestors

STRANGE DEATHS

✝ A 1920s Rolls-Royce, used for weddings, broke down in Stockport, Greater Manchester. As chauffeur Frank Jackson, 70, was working beneath the bonnet, another car rammed into the Roller and Frank's head was impaled on the Silver Lady statuette, killing him. The car was made before Rolls-Royce made the Silver Lady mascots spring-loaded, to flip backwards on impact. *D.Star, Today, 11 Aug 1993.*

✝ On 24 April, Kwarme Shariff, seven, was playing with his twin brother Kwasi outside their apartment block in North Brunswick, New Jersey. He stuck his foot in a small hole and the ground gave way, swallowing him up. People tried to pull him out, but each time he slipped from their grasp and slid deeper into soft mud. A hundred rescuers worked for over seven hours to dig him out, but he was dead on arrival at hospital. Tree stumps buried by builders, rotted by unusually heavy spring rains and the township's "traditionally high water table" probably contributed to the ground's collapse. *NY Times, 25 April; [AP] 26 April; USA Today 28 April 1993.*

✝ Also in April, Willie Murphy, 61, an employee of the Golden Peanut Company in Donalsonville, Georgia, was killed when he was crushed under an avalanche of peanuts; while in July, a 23-year-old sweet factory worker in Marseilles, France, was crushed to death when a bin filled with 5,000 pounds of marshmallows fell on him. *USA Today, 5 April; Daily Record, 15 July 1993.*

✝ North Sea oil worker Ellard Zuidema was decapitated by a helicopter's rotor blades on the diving support ship *Mayo* in April 1992. Mr Zuidema, 6ft 3in, ducked to avoid the blades, but a huge wave caused the *Mayo* to shudder and the blades dipped to 5ft 8in. *D. Telegraph, 5 Nov 1992.*

✝ Tanya Green, 22, of Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, died after having sex with her boyfriend, a week after giving birth to a healthy baby. The post mortem showed that air had been forced into her bloodstream because blood vessels had not closed again after the birth. *Sussex Evening Argus, 21 July 1993.*

✝ Stubborn Armando Pinelli, 70, won his argument with another man over who should sit in the only chair in the shade of a palm tree in Foggia, Italy - then died when it fell on him. *Sun, 18 June 1993.*

FORTEAN ALMANAC 22 November 1993 - 6 February 1994

Notable feasts and anniversaries in the coming weeks

MONDAY 22 NOVEMBER:
On this day in 1963, C.S. Lewis ascended to heaven and Aldous Huxley went out on a cloud of LSD... but the public hardly noticed, being absorbed in the JFK death drama in Dallas.

THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER:
USA Thanksgiving and Feast Day of St Catherine, who was allegedly broken on the wheel (hence 'Catherine wheel'). She was probably derived from the Hindu Kali, who is associated with the wheel of karma.

SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER:
Birthday of William Blake (1757).

TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER:
St Andrew's Day. The X-shaped cross upon which he was said to have been crucified was the same as the cross of Wotan carried by Norse invaders into Scotland, where it became the national symbol.

SUNDAY 5 DECEMBER:
A day for disappearances. In 1872 the *Mary Celeste* was found with all 14 crewmen missing and in 1945 Flight 19 vanished in what was dubbed (20 years later by Vincent Gaddis) 'the Bermuda Triangle'.

WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER:
Bodhi Day - Enlightenment of Gautama Buddha.

TUESDAY 14 DECEMBER:
Kaspar Hauser ran from a park on this day in 1833, crying that he had been stabbed. The park, covered in new-fallen snow, bore only his footprints, but the deep fatal wound in his heart was (in the opinion of two doctors) not self-inflicted.

TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER:
Yule, or Winter Solstice; Sun enters Capricorn 20:26. The Romans called it *Sol Invictus* (the Undefeated Sun).

SATURDAY 25 DECEMBER:
Christmas Day. The birthdays of the Babylonian Queen of Heaven and of Osiris, Dionysos, Adonis, Mithras, Balder and Jesus were celebrated today, the old date of the Winter Solstice. All these deities are associated with rebirth and eternal life.

SATURDAY 1 JANUARY 1994:
The ancient British festival of Gogmagog, and *Circumcisio Domini*, the day Jesus was snipped (said to have been instituted in 487AD). It first appeared in the English liturgy in 1550.

WEDNESDAY 5 JANUARY:
The Feast Day of St Simon Stylites who spent 36 years on top of a pillar 60 feet tall and three feet in diameter. His favourite position was standing with his head touching his feet. He kissed his arse goodbye in 459AD.

FRIDAY 14 JANUARY:
St Hilary's Day, supposedly the coldest day of the year.

MONDAY 17 JANUARY:
Feat Day of St Anthony, patron saint of pigs.

THURSDAY 20 JANUARY:
St Agnes' Eve, the night when young girls can discover their future husbands by divination.

TUESDAY 25 JANUARY:
St Paul's Day (the day Saul was zapped by the Lord). It was thought the weather today determines the character of the coming year: fair weather betided a prosperous year, snow or rain, an unfruitful one; clouds, high livestock mortality; and wind meant war.

SATURDAY 29 JANUARY:
Feat Day of St Francis de Sales (1567-1622), patron saint of journalists.

TUESDAY 1 FEBRUARY:
Imbolc, the first day of Spring in the pagan calendar.

SUNDAY 6 FEBRUARY:
First day of the Regnal Year, "43 Eliz.II".

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

AFRICA Cynthia Hind (Zimbabwe), Ion Alexis Will (Roving). **AUSTRALIA** Greg Axford (Vic), Paul Cropper (NSW), Arthur Chrenkoff (Qld), Rex Gilroy (NSW), Tony Healy (ACT). **BELGIUM** Henri Pr_mont. **CANADA** Brian Chapman (BC), Dwight Whalen (Ont.). **DENMARK** Lars Thomas. **ENGLAND** Claire Blamey, Bruce Chatterton, Peter Christie, Mat Coward, Hilary Evans, Peter Hope-Evans, Neil Frary, Alan Gardiner, Mick Goss, Chris Hall, Jeremy Harte, Ronnie Hoyle, Dionne Jones, Jake Kirkwood, Alexis Lykiard, Nick Maloret, Valerie Martin, Kevin McClure, John Michell, Ralph Noyes, Nigel Pennick, Andy Roberts, Tom Ruffles, Paul Screeton, Karl Shuker, Ian Simmons, Bob Skinner, Anthony Smith, Paul R. Thomas, Nigel Watson, Owen Whiteoak, Steve Wrathall. **FRANCE** Jean-Louis Brodu, Bernard Heuvelmans, Michel Meurger. **GERMANY** Walter J. Langbein, Ulrich Magin. **GREECE** S.C. Tavuchis. **HOLLAND** Robin Pascoe. **HONGKONG** Chris Williams. **ICELAND** V. Kip Hansen. **INDONESIA** Alan M. Stracy. **IRELAND** Peter Costello, Doc Shiels. **JAPAN** Masaru Mori, Shigeo Yokoyama. **NEW ZEALAND** Peter Hassall. **NORTHERN IRELAND** Caryl Sibbett. **PHILIPPINES** Keith Snell. **POLAND** Leszek Matela. **ROMANIA** Iosif Boczor. **RUSSIA** Vladimir Rubtsov. **SCOTLAND** David Burns, Stuart Herkes, Roger Musson, Roland Watson, Jake Williams. **SWEDEN** Anders Liljegren, Sven Ros_n. **USA** Larry E. Arnold (PA), Loren Coleman (ME), James E. Conlan (CT), Karma Tenzin Dorje (CA), David Fideler (MI), Mark A. Hall (MN), Myron S. Hoyt (ME), John Keel (NYC), Jim Lippard (AZ), Kurt Lothmann (TX), Barbra Millspaw (CO), Ray Nelke (MO), Jim Reicken (NY), Ron Schaffner (OH), Chuck Shepherd (FL), Dennis Stacy (TX), Joseph Swatek (NB), Joseph Trainor (MA), Jeffrey Vallance (CA), Robert Anton Wilson (CA), Joseph W. Zarzynski (NY). **TURKEY** Izzet Goksu. **WALES** Janet & Colin Bord, Richard Holland, Joe Kelly.

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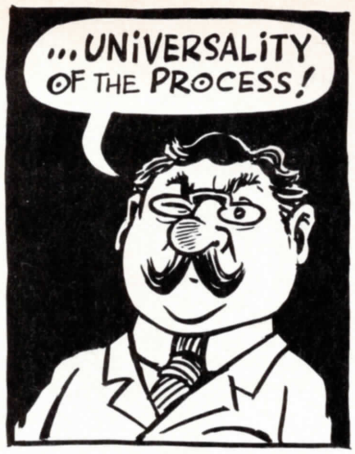
5 POPPER **6** INTERCONTINENTAL FEATURES **7** LORNE GOODE **8 (t+m)** AP **(b)** NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE **10 (t)** ST PETERSBURG PRESS **(b)** DRACULA **11** DR JOHN TYLER/ DR JON DE VOS **12** MERRILY HARPUR **13** ROB STRATTON/WESTERN MAIL **14** REUTER/HULTON DEUTSCH **15** MANCHESTER EVE. NEWS **16** MERRILY HARPUR **17** AP **18** AP **19** COLIN TAYLOR **21** HUNT EMERSON **25-26** MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY **27-28** ROLF OLSSON **29 (b)** CASSIDY & LEIGH **30** REUTERS/HULTON DEUTSCH **31** TOPHAM **32** HULTON DEUTSCH **34** TOPHAM **36** REX FEATURES **37-39** PIATKUS BOOKS **43** HINRICH SIEVEKING **44 (l)** WALT ANDRUS/MUFON **(r)** FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY **45 (r)** FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY **46** KARL SHUKER **49** PA **50 (t)** POPPER **(b)** AP **51** HULTON DEUTSCH **52** J+C BORD **56** PIERRE HOLLINS **64 (b)** NIGEL JONES **65** ELLEN LAVERY

CLIPPINGS & TRANSLATIONS FOR THIS ISSUE

Ian Abel, Jayne Amat, Bruce Baker, Jon Barraclough, K.A.Beer, Lionel Beer, Claire Blamey, Pierre Bonello, Janet & Colin Bord, Iosif Boszov, Bill Botham, Dave Bourgoin, Cuyler Warnell Brooks Jr, David J.Burns, ByRon, Cain, Rod Chambers, Brian Chapman, J.Chetwynd, Arthur Chrenkoff, Peter Christie, J.Clarke, Jim Conlan, Richard Cotton, COUD-I, Mat Coward, Joy Critchley, Paul Cropper, Karma Tenzin Dorje, Jill Doubleday, Ellen Dupont, John Eastman, Bill Ellis, Peter Hope-Evans, George Featherston, Dick Foreman, George L.Foster, Neil Frary, Rob Gandy, Alan Gardiner, Izzet Goksu, Simon Goodman, Matthew Goulding, Andrew Green, Mark Greener, Slim Haines, Robert Hale, M.K.Harris, Peter Hassall, Kevin Hayes, Steve Hexter, Cynthia Hind, Toby Howard, Myron S.Hoyt, I.K.Johnson, Dionne Jones, Joe Kelly, Graeme Kenna, David Keyworth, John J.Kohut, Naomi Lee, Chris Lonsborough, Dave Malin, Nick Maloret, Valerie Martin, David McKinnon, Barbara Millspaw, Jan Mura, R.D.Murrell, L.Naylor, Roger O'Donnell, Robin Pascoe, Matt Peach, Helen Penn, Nigel Pennick, Mark Pilkington, John Price, David Rider, Jim Riecken, Zvi Ron, Sven Ros_n, M.Rothschild, Tom Ruffles, Tom Salusbury, John Sappington, David Scoffins, Ronnie Scott, Paul Screeton, Keith Seddon, Doc Shiels, Caryl Sibbett, Adrian Sill, Ian Simmons, Andy Smith, Anthony Smith, Dennis Stacy, Peter Stallard, H.Stanton, Gary Stone, Joe Swatek, Joff Tanner, Lars Thomas, Paul R.Thomas, Pam Thornton, Fred Tomsett, Richard Turner, UFONS, Jeffrey Vallance, Dr Jon de Vos, David Wallachinsky, Sarah Walsh, Nicholas P.Warren, Christine R.Weiner, John Whiskin, Owen Whiteoak, Ion Will, Chris Williams, Jan Williams, Jason Winter, Steve Wrathall, M.J.Yates.

WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS CHARLIE FORT, IN "THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED," BANGING ON ABOUT THE EXCLUSION OF AWKWARD DATA BY SCIENTIFIC DOGMA! HE'S JUST GOT TO THE BIT WHERE HE EQUATES THIS EXCLUSION WITH SIMILAR PROCESSES THROUGHOUT NATURE... WHAT HE CALLS...



A TREE! IT IS DOING ALL IT CAN TO ASSIMILATE SUBSTANCES OF THE SOIL AND SUBSTANCES OF THE AIR, AND SUNSHINE, TOO, INTO TREE-SUBSTANCE... OBVERSELY IT IS REJECTING OR EXCLUDING OR DISREGARDING THAT WHICH IT CANNOT ASSIMILATE...

PHENOMENOMIX

RIPPED WHOLESALE FROM "THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED" by CHARLES FORT, AND CARTOONED by HUNT EMERSON ... OCT 93.

COW GRAZING...

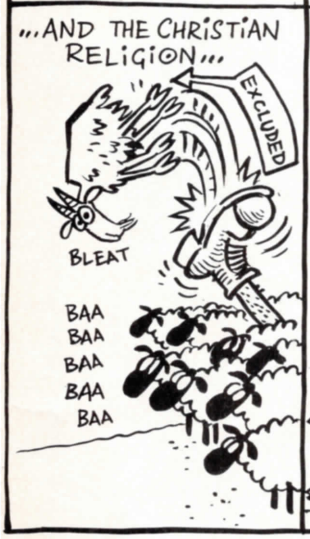
PIG ROOTING...

TIGER STALKING...

PLANETS TRYING TO CAPTURE COMETS...

RAG PICKERS...

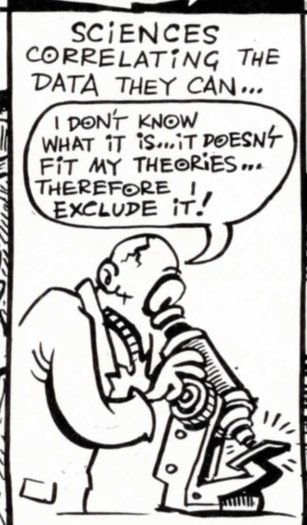
...AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION...



...AND A CAT DOWN HEADFIRST IN A GARBAGE CAN...

NATIONS FIGHTING FOR MORE TERRITORY...

SCIENCES CORRELATING THE DATA THEY CAN...

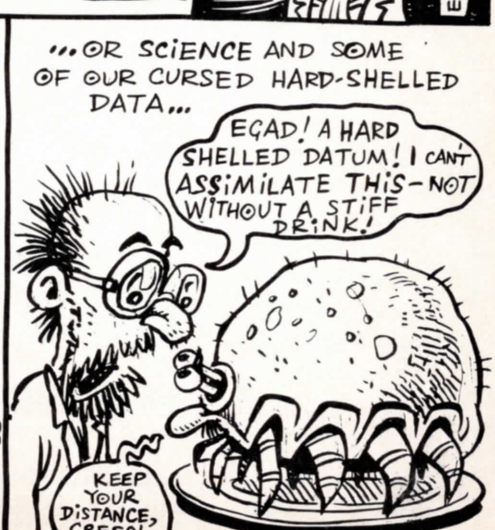


TRUST MAGNATES ORGANIZING...

CHORUS GIRLS OUT FOR A LITTLE LATE SUPPER...

ALL OF THEM STOPPED SOMEWHERE BY THE UNASSIMILABLE! CHORUS GIRL AND THE BROILED LOBSTER...

...OR SCIENCE AND SOME OF OUR CURSED HARD-SHELLED DATA...



Two-Thirds

A Sensational NEW BOOK

By David P Myers

APPENDIX David S Percy

This book is a mind-stretching history of our galaxy and reveals how we are related to other peoples of this and other galaxies.
This work contrasts sharply with the established view of the way things are, because to date human beings have only been able to measure the Universe from a very limited platform — this planet.

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For example, ***Stonehenge*** in England is an encoded ***scale model*** of the ***Spinning Disk.***
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FV72

THE BIG SLEEP

After centuries of research, sleep is still a mysterious phenomenon, at once a familiar part of our lives and yet forgetful, ominous, healing, surreal, magical and death-like. The archives of sleep research include many accounts of strange sleepers, and we review here some of the more extreme forms which may relate to the 'Sleeping Beauty' syndrome.

THE BIG SLEEP

NODDING OFF

A veritable slumber party of miscellaneous notes on protracted sleepers and their ilk, compiled by BOB RICKARD

There is something profound and mysterious about unusually prolonged or deep sleep. Beliefs about magically-induced sleep have been noted in cultures all over the world. They are also very ancient, possibly even prehistoric: one European example is the story of Sleeping Beauty sent into her 100-year slumber by the prick of an enchanted needle, preceded by the story of Wotan causing Brunhilda to sleep surrounded by a magic fire through which only a brave hero can pass to waken her with a kiss.

The most famous sleepers in Christian legend were seven youths who hid themselves, allegedly in 250 AD, in a cave near Ephesus to escape persecution. They fell asleep and were discovered, still youthful, 200 years later. (Eastern churches commemorate this miraculous awakening each 27 July, a feast day commended to all who suffer from insomnia.) More ancient still is the story of Epimenides, who is said to have wandered into a nymph-haunted cave on Crete at the end of the 7th century BC and woken up between 40 and 100 years later. Another variant, called 'the king under the hill', concerns a local or national hero who is not dead, but sleeping in a secret place awaiting the call of his people in their hour of need: this is said of King Arthur, numerous central European hero-kings like Charlemagne, the Tibetan hero Gesar, and many others.

The legendary 20-year sleep of Rip Van Winkle is, in fact, a pastiche of the kind of tall story this Dutch colonist made up to cover his alcohol-induced amnesia, yet it demonstrates the relationship of prolonged sleep to the ubiquitous folklore motif known as 'the supernatural passage of time'. Typically this occurred when the story's hero was transported to fairyland or some other enchanted location and returned to find so much time had passed in the 'real' world that all the people he knew are long dead. While this is usually taken as a metaphor for sleep, it more accurately reflects the type of selective amnesia found in such strange states of consciousness as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), in which two or more alternating personalities have no recollection of their intervening 'sleep'. Bizarre instances include picking up in mid-speech or action at the exact point at which they were interrupted, the hiatus ranging from minutes to several years.

Prolonged sleep has to be distinguished from long-term comas resulting from neurological damage to the brain; and from African sleeping sickness (once thought to be a form of narcolepsy, but which is in fact a fever caused by protozoal parasites). Many medical commentators recognised the hysterical or neurotic nature of extraordinarily extended periods of sleep, and in reviewing many of the accounts for this summary it is clear that a significant proportion of them could be re-diagnosed today as variants of the syndromes which produce the behavioural problems discussed by Jim Schnabel in these pages.

Washington Irving's Rip van Winkle, drawn by Hoppin (1864)

> "The legendary 20-year sleep of Rip Van Winkle is, in fact, a pastiche of the kind of tall story this Dutch colonist made up to cover his alcohol-induced amnesia."

Some people have an unusual condition in which they tend to fall asleep during incongruous activities, such as walking. This is known as narcolepsy, a rare form of which, cataplexy, can be triggered by emotional excitement. Katherine Porter, 17, from Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, for example, collapses unconsciously whenever she laughs. "If I am watching something funny on television, I have to force myself not to laugh", she told the *Yorkshire Post* (5 May 1990). "If I feel one coming on, I have to pull a cushion over my face and concentrate hard. I once fell asleep during a history lesson on the Battle of Hastings when somebody said something funny. I dreamt I had been stabbed by a Viking. I woke with a start and lashed out and my books went everywhere. It was very embarrassing."

Today, conditions such as Katherine's can be controlled with drug therapy, but they are still poorly understood. Their complexity is underlined by the psychologist Ernest Hilgard, who tentatively relates narcolepsy and cataplexy to hypnotic-like states of 'double consciousness' typical of MPD. Whatever their origin and however they are triggered, he regards them as a genuine altered state of consciousness, related to the kind of 'blackout' in which someone "drives a car satisfactorily for some miles and presently finds himself registering at a hotel having forgotten how he got there or why he is there."

Gould and Pyle were firmly of the opinion that numerous related conditions, from premature burial to "the fabulous sleeping girls of the newspapers" arise from "spontaneous mesmeric sleep in hysteric patients" lasting from a few minutes to several years. As in normal sleep, there is a turning in or up of the eyeballs, lowering of body temperature, slowing of respiration, pulse and digestive tract – and even brief moments of wakefulness. Little nourishment is taken during these periods, and bowel movements often dwindle to less than one a month, and sometimes disappear altogether. In this, the similarities with animal hibernation have not been lost on some medical commentators. We have to omit discussion of voluntary suspended animation for lack of space.

Unlike normal sleep, however, there appears to be a low-level operation of consciousness resembling in almost every way a deep hypnoid

state. This may include selective responses to certain sensory stimulation – being sensitive to voiced suggestions, for example, but not to pain, taste, smell or bright light. Sometimes the sleep may be accompanied by a cataleptic rigidity of the muscles, so that the sleeper's limbs hold the position into which they are moved – one hears of bizarre postures being maintained for years in this manner.

Most of the accounts we could find were of sleep lasting from most of a day up to six months, and fell into two classes – those who slept continuously, and the rest whose sleep was broken with (often regular) periods of wakefulness – the most impressive from each is given in our listing on p28. The intermittent interruptions themselves varied in length, some sleepers appearing normal and others still drowsy. They were noted with care because they were often the only opportunities for the sleeper to attend to nourishment and calls of nature, some even falling back into sleep in the act of eating or defecating.

Wilson provides brief accounts of eight sleepers (in the years 1546, 1696, 1738, 1777, 1788, 1826 and 1827) with slumber times ranging between 18 hours (daily) and three months. The earliest instance concerns William Foxley, a pot-maker for the Mint in the Tower of London, who "fell asleep" on 27 April 1546 and "could not be awaked by pricking, cramping or burning". When he awoke 14 days later he was unaware of the passage of time "as if he had only slept one night".

Many sleepers slumbered on through horrific torments – Wanley provides two detailed case histories. Samuel Chilton (see under 'Intermittent') was "bled, blistered, cupped and scarified". Doctors also pushed a pin into his arm until it hit a bone, injected him with sal amoniac, and crammed hellbore into his nostrils. Elizabeth Orrin (see under 'Intermittent') was not only burned and jabbed by over-enthusiastic medicos, but they gave her strong emetics, shouted in her ears, whipped her "till the blood ran from her shoulders", and exposed her to angry bees after smearing her with honey.

Kirby's treasure trove of Forteana yields nine additional cases (in the years 1694, 1711, 1734, 1738, 1753, 1808, 1812 and two from 1752) of between three days and four months. Nearer the present, the pioneer psychiatrist Weir Mitchell [cited in G&P] collected 18 cases from the 19th century, the longest being six months continuous sleep. A few died asleep; one recovered only to be afflicted with insomnia; the rest recovered normally.

Many other cases could be found – especially from continental and early medical literature – but, in general, they lack the detail that would aid us in making a diagnosis at this distance. Most defy easy categorisation, confusing sleep with trance, coma, possession and even melancholia with breathtaking ease.

THE BIG SLEEP

THE SLEEPING PREACHERS

Sleeping preachers and healers constitute a major subcategory of strange sleepers, but they differ significantly from the extended sleepers in that their sleep was relatively short and transient, having more in common with mediumship or channelling. It is not difficult to understand how, in archæic communities, such sleepers were thought to be in touch with the divine – it was, after all, the basis for Asclepius's sleep cures in ancient Greece. In the late 1800s, thousands of superstitious Italians brought their sick to the bedside of Bettina Pieri (see under 'Intermittent') hoping for cures.

Perhaps the most famous example is Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), the psychical healer of Virginia. Although he was known as 'The Sleeping Prophet', this epithet referred not to prolonged sleep but to the trance state in which Cayce made his diagnoses. He found it also facilitated inspired preaching.

An earlier example is Simeon Watson, aged 30, an English labourer of 'athletic habits', who, in April 1826, began spouting fluent and structured sermons in his sleep.

Edgar Cayce

During these periods, which always began with convulsions and groaning, his hands could not be unclasped and he could not be roused.

Rachel Baker, famous in her day as 'The Sleeping Prophet', is another example. Born in 1794, she grew up in a poor but devout family in Marcellus, New York, and from the age of 17 endured periods of somnambulism and morbid fears about spectres and being dragged down to Hell. These increased until she sank into daily periods of trance, during which she uttered solemn devotional sermons that impressed people sufficiently for them to be collected and published in 1815. This was 37 years before the Fox sisters began the Spiritualist movement, also in New York State, which also combined trance oration (somniloquism) with possession by spirits of the dead.

In many early observations, however, the trance state was thought to be a peculiar kind of sleep and related to possession; today, the parallels with behavioural syndromes, such as MPD, can be more clearly seen. Trance preaching had a considerable history in the Protestant tradition, even before Wesleyan revivalists became known for it in the 18th century, and can still be found in congregations today, from Quakers to Pentecostals, that invoke the Holy Spirit. Finland, in particular, has produced 'sleeping preachers' since the 1770s. [*Lazell, Shepard, Wilson*]

THE BIG SLEEP

THE BROOKLYN ENIGMA

The baffling phenomena of Mollie Fancher, a sleeping cripple with multiple personalities

Born in Brooklyn in 1848, Mollie was a tuberculous child, given to 'nervous disorders'. Shortly after her seventeenth birthday in 1866, she met with two accidents which left her blind and an incurable invalid. She spent the remaining 30 years of her life bedridden in her aunt's house in Brooklyn.

For the first nine years of her confinement, Mollie slept in a coma or trance (no one could decide which), lying on her paralysed right side, her legs twisted and atrophied beneath her. In those nine years her body functions all but ceased – she took little or no food for very long periods, and she suffered nightly convulsions. She was deathly cold – a little warmth and a faint pulse could only be detected in the region of her heart.

While Mollie slumbered, however, her crippled body manifested four quite distinct personalities who accepted and transcended their poor vehicle. Though Mollie was virtually blind and paralysed, these entities used her hands to create exquisite needlework and paper flowers. This was accomplished in a peculiar position, the work being done above and behind her head, out of normal visual range. One investigator noted that each personality had a different style of handwriting, each nonetheless 'beautiful'.

Mollie's eyes were enhanced, despite being severely damaged by years of unblinking, tearless staring. Somehow, Mollie could see perfectly in the dark and read books placed under her pillow. She 'saw' into all parts of the house (invariably being correct about the location of lost objects) and even described events in distant towns. This has been described as 'travelling clairvoyance' and recalls the statement by Rachel Baker (see under 'Sleeping Preachers'), a generation earlier. Rachel told researchers that her self-awareness was not dimmed by sleep when she trance-preached, because she was aware that she existed for that period at locations far distant from her body. Like Rachel, too, Mollie often clarified Christian doctrine for her listeners.

Mollie Fancher in 1864, aged 16

After nine years, Mollie's body relaxed, but was subject to prolonged fits of such violence that she was frequently hurled out of bed. Her original personality returned between the convulsions but had to share her body with a number of other personalities, usually at night. The five major ones were often mutually hostile and their arguments were known to go on all night exhausting their host and her carers. The conversation of each would be picked up exactly where it left off, regardless of the amount of time lapsed between those moments.

Mollie often spoke of seeing the 'angelic forms' of dead relatives and friends, and said "I am with friends in most heavenly places" during the times her other personalities evicted her from her body. She knew of the new Spiritualist movement, but refused vehemently to act as a medium for the curious and the bereaved.

As her fame spread, more and more savants and clergy came to test her. Many were turned away as she had no wish to be exhibited. Mollie would not see any but close friends, some of whom left useful records of her strange phenomena. Mollie, or rather her other personalities, passed every test – for example: Henry Parkhurst, an eminent astronomer, testified to her powers of eyeless sight when she read a torn-up letter he retrieved from a wastebasket and sealed in an envelope.

Undoubtedly, Mollie's case would be seen in a different light today. Her ailments have the ambiguity typical of hysterical phenomena, leading one to suppose her blindness and paralysis may have had a psychosomatic origin. That she also manifested unexplained psi talents while in this condition is supported by impressive evidence. *[Thurston, Shepard]*

BELOW: Mollie in 1886, aged 38, in the long second phase of her illness, with her aunt, Susan Crosby. Despite 30 years of lying on her atrophied legs, she never had a single bedsore.

THE BIG SLEEP

CAROLINA DREAMING

ROLF J.K. OLSSON tells the remarkable story of Carolina Olsson (no relation, apparently) whose unbroken sleep of over 32 years is the longest on record.

On 22 February 1876, a 14-year-old girl called Carolina Olsson, from Mönsteras in Småland, fell into a mysterious trance-like sleep. She did not wake up until 3 April 1908, 32 years and 42 days later. About two months after her awakening, Carolina returned to a normal life, which carried on for another 42 years. She died in April 1950, at the age of 89.

No-one else in history has slept for a longer continuous period than this girl, and the cause of her long sleep was never established. It was conjectured that she had fallen on the ice and hurt her head on her way home from school.

It is remarkable that Carolina didn't suffer any after-effects from her long sleep. Most people who, because of injury or illness, sink into a coma that lasts for years, eventually die without regaining consciousness. Those who survive and wake up are usually disabled for life. But when Carolina woke up in 1908, her life continued in much the same way from the point she had fallen asleep in 1876, and she had a normal memory of what had happened until the day her sleep began.

Carolina lived with her parents and five siblings in a crofter's cottage at Oknö, south of Mönsteras. Returning home from school one day in February 1876, she complained of a headache, saying something about having slipped on the ice. A few days later, she got so tired that she was confined to bed. In the evening of 22 February, she suddenly fell into a coma.

The days passed by, but Carolina continued to sleep. It was impossible to wake her up, and her parents didn't know what to do. Her father was a crofter and fisherman, and because he was poor he hesitated for as long as he could before sending for a doctor. The family kept the sleeping girl alive by forcing her to swallow milk or sugared water. This food was to be Carolina's only diet for more than 32 years.

As time passed by and the girl showed no signs of improvement, her parents finally called in a doctor, but he could only confirm that the girl was in a trance-like sleep. She did not react to being spoken to, nor to bodily contact. Not even needles stuck into her fingers prompted a reaction.

In the years to come, many physicians took an interest in the case and came up with some curious explanations. One doctor explained the girl's remarkable condition as 'hysterical paralysis', presumably caused by a sudden scare or shock. He did not, however, know how to wake her up.

Carolina's parents were now desperate, and hoping to get help from a specialist, they took her to the hospital in Oskarshamn. She was subjected to dangerous experiments, the hospital personnel demonstrating a severe lack of judgment. They even tried to rouse her with electricity, without success. She was sent home as incurable.

In their little cottage, consisting of one room and a kitchen, the Olsson family now got used to having the sleeping girl on their sofa bed. Her mother tended her carefully, and kept watch at her bedside even at night. The family got no help from the medical establishment, and it is easy to understand their despair. One county medical officer even described the girl as "a mentally backward person, pretending to be ill." Rumours flew around the village. Some thought that the girl was faking; others that her soul had been abducted by a supernatural being. Local wise women who were consulted offered no solution.

Carolina Olsson shortly after she had woken up in 1908, after 32 years asleep

As the years passed, Carolina's face became pale and thin. In 1904, when she had been asleep for 28 years, her mother died. Thereafter, a widow in the neighbourhood helped the family with the housekeeping.

At nightfall on 3 April 1908, she entered the cottage and found Carolina "jumping around the floor, like a dark shadow", exclaiming "Mother! Mother!"

> "Though she was 46, she looked like a woman of 25. Her body had not grown or aged at all – it was still the body of a 14-year-old. Even more remarkable was that her hair and nails had not grown during her years asleep."

The housekeeper told her that her mother was dead, as were two of her brothers, who had drowned. Carolina looked around the room in const-ernation. Much had changed since she had fallen asleep. The door opened and an old man and two middle-aged men came in. She found it hard to grasp that these were her father and two of her brothers. "But they were small", she objected, pointing to her brothers.

Asked if she was hungry, Carolina said that she wanted cured herring. She felt faint and dizzy, but recovered surprisingly fast – "As though a miracle had taken place", one doctor said. Only a

couple of months later she was fully at work in her home. Though she was 46, she looked like a woman of 25. Her body had not grown or aged at all – it was still the body of a 14-year-old. Even more remarkable was that her hair and nails had not grown during her years asleep.

The news spread rapidly that *Törnrosa* (the Sleeping Beauty) had finally woken, and newspapermen from all over the country gathered on her doorstep, followed by hordes of the curious. Carolina was looked at like a circus animal. One day, no less than 27 coaches were parked at the cottage. Finally, her family had to keep the door locked and all the curtains drawn.

About two years later, Carolina was examined by a psychiatrist from Stockholm's Hospital för Sinnessjuka (a mental hospital), Dr Harold Fröderström, who noticed that the woman looked young; her skin smooth and her teeth very well preserved. He found her "of a cheery temperament, and she gave clear and intelligent answers to all the questions she was asked". She could read and write, and remembered everything she had learned before she fell asleep.

Her father had seen Carolina get up three times during her sleep. One night he found her kneeling in bed praying to "sweet Jesus". This was the only time during the 32 years that she was heard talking. On some other occasions her family had heard her crying and sobbing in her sleep.

Carolina Olsson (centre) on her 80th birthday

The cause of Carolina's long sleep remains a medical mystery. It was not an established fact that she had fallen on the ice and hurt her head. Dr Fröderström suggested that her abnormal condition was the result of "disturbances of the internal secretions, caused by self-intoxication, generated through the influence of her sexual organs".

Carolina lived a normal life for another 42 years. Her friends described her as an industrious, humorous and talkative person, who took a natural interest in whatever happened in her neighbourhood; but whenever she was asked about the lost years, if she remembered anything about her longest night and what dreams she had had, she became silent and reluctant to answer.

Adapted from an article published in the Swedish magazine ***Vi*** *(September 1991). Thanks to Sven Rosén for the translation.*

THE BIG SLEEP

SLEEPYHEADS

The Fortean Times League Table of continuous, intermittent and comatose...

CONTINUOUS SLEEPERS

32 YEARS 42 DAYS – Carolina Olsson's continuous sleep is probably the longest ever recorded. See accompanying article by Rolf Olsson. Details (and probably accuracy) are wanting on the historical cases, but these notes provide a guide to other sleepers.

20 YEARS – In 1883, Frenchwoman Margaret Boyenval – later known as 'The Sleeping woman of Thenolles' – was so anxious over a visit from the village policeman that she collapsed and 'slept' for 20 years. In 1902 her doctor saw signs of returning consciousness. Opening her eyes, she remarked, "You are pinching me", and immediately went to sleep again. She died five months later, still asleep, on 28 May 1903. [Corliss (BHF33, X0); Woodall]

4 YEARS – A French woman aged 25, collapsed after a 'fright' on 30 May 1883. Her menstruation was suppressed. [G&P]

1 YEAR 3 MTHS – A Kentucky man, aged 27, fell into a 'trance' in 1874, while suffering from tuberculosis . [G&P]

1 YEAR 2 MTHS – Spanish soldier, aged 22, in Cuba, following unspecified injury and depression. Reported in 1885. [G&P]

260 DAYS – A Dutch peasant slept from 29 June 1706 to 15 March 1707, waking briefly on 11 January 1707. [G&P]

220 DAYS – Maria Cvetskens of Stevenswerth, Holland. Not much is known about this young girl, but medical investigators found no signs of deception. Sleep continued beyond the report date of 5 December 1895. [G&P]

INTERMITTENT SLEEPERS

73 YEARS – The record must go to Italian Bettina Pieri, who went to bed in 1864 when she was 15, and remained there until she died, aged 88. She was widely believed to have miraculous powers. According to the Rome newspaper *Tribuna*, when she awoke, which was once in every three or four years, people came from miles around and sent their sick to her in hundreds. Her mind was perfectly clear; her health was surprisingly good throughout her life, although her hair turned snow white. [Woodall]

26 YEARS – In 1874 a farmer named Harms, of St Charles, Minnesota, went to bed, where he remained for the rest of his life. Although he woke up for regular meals, his weight dropped from 14 stone to six before he died. [Woodall] ▷

19 YEARS – In 1884, 16-year-old Gesine Meyer, of Grambke near Bremen, fell asleep after falling from a cart. She seemed perfectly well when she awoke three months later. Two years later, she took to sleeping for long periods. In late 1886 she fell into a deep coma, from which she did not awaken until 15 November 1903, when a fire broke out in the village and the alarm bells were rung. She sat up and called for her father and brother. She asked her brother, who 17 years earlier had been a conscript, why he was not in uniform. When told what had happened, she said: "Why, I thought I had only been asleep for one night". [Woodall]

Elizabeth Perkins in 1789

18 YEARS – A New Orleans girl was aged nine when prolonged sleep began, apparently precipitated by large doses of morphine and quinine. She woke each day for 12 brief but regular moments. Reported in 1869. [G&P]

15 YEARS – John Maceachin, 75, a farm labourer from Argyle, broke his thigh in 1921 and was taken to the West Highland Rest Hospital at Oban. There, he fell asleep after a meal, and until he died 15 years later, slept 22 hours a day. He awoke for meals, but never uttered another word. [Woodall]

15 YEARS – Elizabeth Orrin, aged 36, of Hainault in Belgium, slept for four days 1738, then for 18 hours every day for 15 years. She could not be woken by the most painful tortures, and slept through the cannon-fire during the siege of nearby Mons in 1746. During sleep, her limbs would stay rigidly where they were put. [Kirby, Wanley]

5 YEARS – A New York man averaged 16 hours awake over six weeks or more. Reported in 1853. [G&P]

4 YEARS – Following a 'sudden fright', a 14yr-old German girl fell into deep lethargy, broken only by an average of four hours dreamy wakefulness every 96 hours. Menstruation ceased. Early 1800s. [G&P]

2 YEARS – In 1696, Samuel Chilton of Tinsbury near Bath, in Somerset, a smallholder of 'robust habit' aged 25, fell soundly asleep for four weeks. Then a month later he slept for 17 weeks, waking on 17 August 1698. A year later, on the very anniversary of his waking, he plunged into a five-month period of semi-consciousness from which he could not be roused (though he did wake briefly on 19 November 1697). He woke in early February 1698, returning to his usual routines. [Wilson, Wanley]

2 YEARS – In 1788, Elizabeth Perkins – **above** – of Morley in Norfolk was unconscious for 11 days 6 hours. A week after recovering she sank into a profound sleep which lasted until her death in 1790. This portrait was drawn on 26 July 1789. [Wilson]

UNKNOWN – Godofredo Souza, 49, a farm worker from Rio Branco, Brazil, cannot hold down a job because he regularly sleeps for two months at a time. Doctors are baffled. [*Sun*, 15 July 1992]

COMATOSE SLEEPERS

Because of the lack of details in the historical cases it is difficult to determine whether or not the unconscious period derived from a head wound or from some other affliction, such as toxæmia, caused by infections which nowadays can be controlled with antibiotics. Here are a few coma records for comparison.

37 YEARS 111 DAYS – Elaine Esposito of Tarpon Springs, Florida, never awoke from an appendectomy on 6 August 1941. She died in 1979. [The Guinness Book of Records]

29 YEARS – In 1963, in Florida, Anne Shapiro suffered a stoke and was in a coma-like trance until October 1992 when chest pains caused her to wake up. She wanted to watch *I Love Lucy* on the TV to take her mind off the Kennedy assassination. [Canadian Press 14 Nov 1992]

8 YEARS – Conley Holbrook of North Carolina beaten on the head in 1983. In 1991 he revived and named his assailants. [See ***FT59:34***]

A young woman from Chichester exhibited another peculiarity of sleep in 1989. "I lie in until lunchtime if I don't have to work and when I do I always come home for a nap before going out", said Tina Houghton, 18, an auxiliary nurse. She had survived a 13-month pregnancy when the fœtus went into an unexplained 'form of hibernation', before resuming normal growth. Tina weighed 7lb 7oz at birth. She had to be woken three times a day for feeding. "Her last feed was at 7pm", said her mother, "and she would sleep right through the night until nine the following morning. We were never woken by her crying in the middle of the night. It was amazing." **D.Telegraph, 23 May 1989.**

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Special thanks are due to Bob Skinner and Paul Sieveking for their contributions of source material and data.

SHOOTING DOWN THE MYTH

The assassination of President Kennedy on 22 November 1963 continues to haunt and fascinate the public, perhaps more than any other murder. Nearly everyone now agrees that Lee Harvey Oswald did not act alone – if indeed he was involved at all. The event acts as a focus for studying the nature of historical evidence and interpretation. It is a sort of Rorschach blot, prompting the world's conspiracy theorists to construct endless and labyrinthine scenarios. Glenn B. Fleming investigates.

So far, no fewer than 23 people have been 'identified' as being responsible for firing shots into Kennedy's limousine on 22 November 1963. Men in bushes, in open windows, in storm drains, in moving vans, across the Plaza, on the overpass, in the Book Depository, on the Book Depository roof, in the records Building, in the Dal-Tex building, with umbrellas. No *woman* has been named as a possible sniper, which comes as a welcome surprise, if not a relief.

These assassins, these desperados, linked so tenuously to organised crime, the CIA, the KGB, the OAS, Texan oil millionaires, US Military Intelligence, the John Birch Society, anti-Castro mavericks and a host of other faceless organisations are still, apparently, walking free.

The JFK assassination, America's darkest hour, has become a million dollar industry. Books, films and tours of the murder site are now available to everyone. The only thing that isn't available is the truth. What really did happen that day?

The history books, written by intelligent and enlightened men, tell us that a lone, crazed young man called Lee Harvey Oswald crouched in a window at his place of work waiting for the President. In his hands lay his mail order rifle, ready for murder. No motive was positively established for Oswald (himself shot dead in the custody of the Dallas police less than 48 hours later), but we are told that it may have had something to do with Oswald being jealous of Kennedy and, following a tiff with his estranged wife, deciding to get his own back on her by killing someone she admired. Oswald also admired his President and later denied shooting him.

No one actually saw Oswald commit the crime and several witnesses placed him elsewhere than the sixth floor Book Depository window (from which he allegedly shot the President) at the time of the shooting. Oswald was a poor shot, as revealed by his Marine Corps records and testimony from those he served with. The top three rifle experts in America could not equal Oswald's amazing feat of three shots, two hits, in 5.6 seconds with that rifle, in that time.

Paraffin tests taken from Oswald's hands and cheeks three hours after his arrest prove that he had not fired a rifle that day. Did he wear a mask and gloves? Neither were found. Photographs found of Oswald holding the alleged murder weapon are almost certainly fakes, as Oswald himself said during the interrogation. Over the years, the names of many of Oswald's 'acquaintances' have been linked to the CIA, the Mafia and anti-Castro movements.

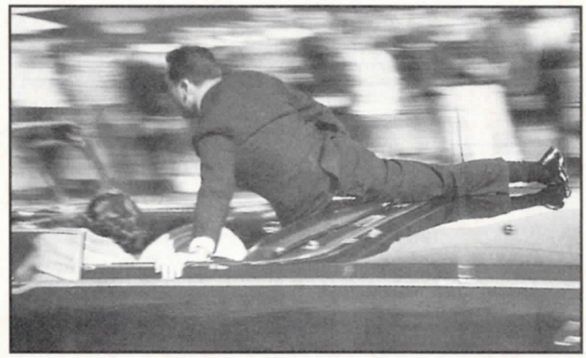
A high-powered rifle was found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository that afternoon and was subsequently identified by two Dallas police officers as a German Mauser (they clearly state in their report that 'Mauser' was stamped on the barrel of the weapon). Later, after the arrest of Oswald, the rifle was re-identified as a 20-year-old Italian Mannlicher Carcano. The telescopic sight mounted on the Carcano was found to be defective. This type of rifle was notorious for jamming and was commonly known as a 'humanitarian rifle' because it would not injure the enemy. The Carcano was traced to Oswald through a post office box in Dallas. He denied ever owning a rifle.

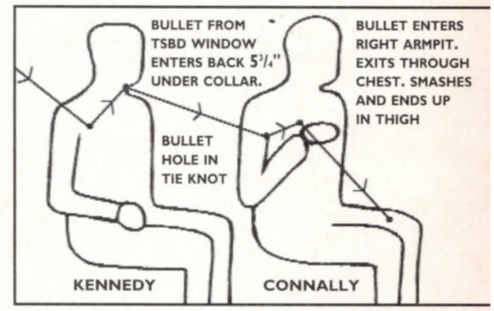
One theory suggests that there were two plots that day and claims that several unidentified Texas businessmen were anxious to be rid of their Governor, John Connally. Connally, who died recently, always maintained that he was hit by a different bullet. (The infamous 'magic bullet', the key exhibit of the official version, supposedly hit JFK in the back, exited via his throat, hit Connally in the back, exited via his chest, went through his wrist and ended up in his right thigh. Apparently, more bullet fragments were left in the Governor's wrist than were found to be missing from the bullet. This 'magic bullet' was later found on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital, even though doctors operating on Connally told reporters that the bullet was "still in the leg".) Author and journalist Joachim Jorsten believes Connally was shot by a different hit-team, firing at the same time the President was shot.

Some people believe Lyndon Johnson, the man who inherited Kennedy's crown, was behind the assassination. Didn't Johnson have the most to gain from Kennedy's early (if not violent) demise? What about J. Edgar Hoover? He'd

been at loggerheads with the Kennedy brothers, especially Bobby, for years. Then, what about Joe Kennedy's alleged links with the Mafia? According to unsubstantiated speculation, organised crime bosses like Sam Giancana bought the election for Joe only to see Jack foolishly turn his back on his benefactors. Was Jimmy Hoffa, ruthless leader of the all-powerful Teamsters' Union, involved? If anybody had a grudge against the Kennedys, it was him; Bobby Kennedy had been hounding him for years.

Fidel Castro became a suspect too. Could Oswald have been one of his agents? Oswald had been involved with the 'Fair Play for Cuba' movement in New Orleans that summer of 1963, when, posing as a pro-Castro sympathiser, he had been arrested by the FBI. Two days earlier, he had posed as an *anti*-Castro sympathiser.




BULLET FROM TSBD WINDOW ENTERS BACK 5¾" UNDER COLLAR.
BULLET ENTERS RIGHT ARMPIT. EXITS THROUGH CHEST. SMASHES AND ENDS UP IN THIGH
BULLET HOLE IN TIE KNOT
KENNEDY
CONNALLY

TOP LEFT: The presidential car approximately one minute before the assassination.

BELOW LEFT: A security man clambers over the back seat – or is it one of the assassins?

ABOVE: Trajectory of the 'magic bullet'

Was Khrushchev still angry with Kennedy for humiliating him during the Cuban Missile Crisis a few months earlier? Hadn't Oswald defected to the Soviet Union in 1959, returning to the United States in the summer of 1962? Was Oswald being controlled by the KGB? Was it the *real* Oswald who came back home, or a Soviet impostor, a döppelganger trained for the assassination? British author Michael Eddowes succeeded in having the body of whoever it was in Oswald's Fort Worth grave dug up in 1981. It was found to be Oswald, though the head had somehow separated from the body...

Closer to home, Kennedy had spoken of a total withdrawal of all US personnel from Vietnam by 1965. He was going to use this stance as part of his campaign for re-election in the fall of 1964. After his death, Johnson made a complete U-turn on that policy. We all know what happened in Southeast Asia over the next decade. Kennedy declared he would "splinter the CIA into a thousand pieces". Would America's top spy agency turn against its own commander-in-chief?

Nobody today really believes Oswald acted alone, except the intelligent and enlightened, and many question whether he actually fired any shots at the motorcade. Some say he was a government agent and had infiltrated the group planning the murder; others maintain he was simply a patsy, a fall guy.

Clearly, something is not quite right concerning this crime. Through the years, the 'truth' has become tainted and, even if the 'truth' were revealed, who would believe it? Just about everybody in American officialdom was compromised that day. As American eyes turned skyward for a possible invasion from an enemy who had cut down their new hope, the powerbase in the United States shifted a little further from the reaches of the Presidency and the people.

The late Jim Garrison, District Attorney of New Orleans and the only man to bring the case to trial, called the assassination a 'coup d'état'. Witnesses to the killing and acquaintances of Oswald began mysteriously to drop dead like flies in the years after 1963. By 1973, 116 of them had died in dubious circumstances.

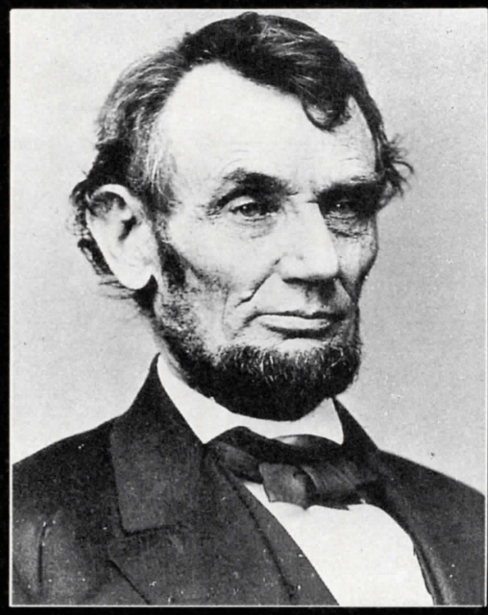
"The JFK assassination, America's darkest hour, has become a million dollar industry. Books, films and tours of the murder site are now available to everyone. The only thing that isn't available is the truth."

Jack Ruby, Oswald's killer, died shortly after Jim Garrison's secret probe into the assassination became public. Cancer. Rose Cheramie, a stripper at Ruby's night club, told people that the President was to be shot in Dallas two days before it happened. Killed by a hit and run driver. Dorothy Kilgannan, the only journalist to be granted a solitary interview with Ruby, declared she would blow the case right open. Barbiturate overdose.

Of the first two journalists to meet Ruby's boyfriend, one was killed by a karate chop as he left his shower, the other was shot 'by accident' by a cop in Long Beach, California. David Ferrie, a strange individual with ties to the CIA and the Mafia and a known acquaintance of Oswald, died the day before Garrison was going to arrest him. Ruptured blood vessel to the brain. And so on, and so on.

Coincidence or conspiracy?

In 1979, 16 years after the event, the House Select Committee of Assassinations recommended that the Justice Department reopen the investigation into Kennedy's death, having found evidence of a 'possible conspiracy'. So far, they appear to have done nothing.



THE LINCOLN-KENNEDY COINCIDENCES

One of the most popular documents in Xerox folklore is the Lincoln-Kennedy correspondences. The following is compiled mainly from the Wallace family's Book of Lists No.3 (1983), an item by Larry King in USA Today (21 Nov 1988) and one by E. Randall Floyd in San Antonio (TX) Express-News (16 July 1991).

● Abraham Lincoln studied law, was elected a Congressman in 1846 and President on 6 November 1860. John F. Kennedy studied law, was elected a Congressman in 1946 and President on 8 November 1960. Both were civil rights campaigners.

● Two of Lincoln's sons were named Edward and Robert. Edward died at age three, Robert lived on. Two of Kennedy's brothers were named Robert and Edward. Robert was assassinated, Edward lived on.

● Lincoln was succeeded by Andrew Johnson, who was born in 1808. Kennedy was succeeded by Lyndon Johnson, who was born in 1908. Both Johnsons served in the US Senate.

● Mary Lincoln and Jackie Kennedy both had children who died while their husbands were in the White house.

● Both presidents were shot on a Friday in the back of the head with their wives present. Both men had expressed anxiety about possible assassination earlier in the day.

● Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth, and Kennedy's alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, were both Southerners in their 20s. (Booth was born in 1838 and Oswald in 1939.)

● Lincoln's secretary, John Kennedy, advised him not to go to the theatre. Kennedy's secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, advised him not to go to Dallas.

● Booth shot Lincoln in a theatre and hid in a warehouse. Kennedy was shot from a warehouse; Oswald was found sitting in a theatre. Lincoln was killed in Ford's Theater. Kennedy was killed in a Ford Lincoln convertible. Booth and Oswald were both killed before they could be tried in court. Lincoln was shot with a pistol and his assassin with a rifle. Kennedy with a rifle and his putative assassin with a pistol.

● The names Lincoln and Kennedy each contain seven letters, Andrew Johnson and Lyndon Johnson each have 13 letters, and John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald each total 15 letters.

TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ZAPRUDER FILM

The 8mm film shot on Elm Street, Dallas, on the fateful afternoon by patriotic dressmaker Abraham Zapruder has become one of the central exhibits in the eternal investigation of the JFK mystery. Viewers have interpreted the images in many different ways. Here are two examples.

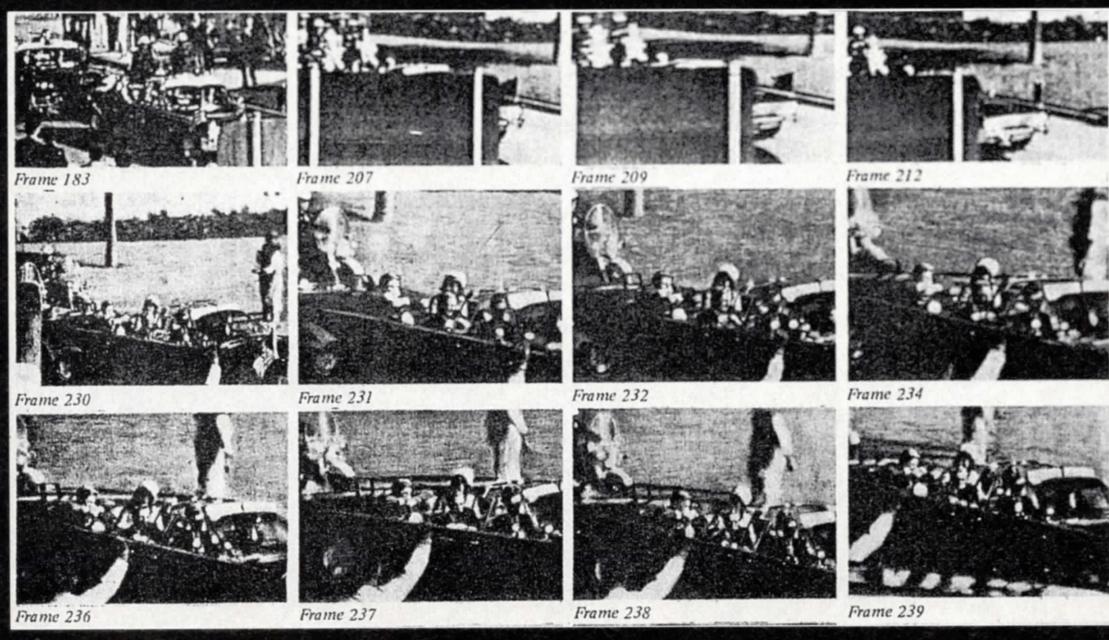
Seventeen research papers were delivered at Second Research Conference of the Third Decade of JFK Assassination Studies on 18-20 June 1993 in Providence, Rhode Island. R.B. Cutler's paper 'The Umbrella Man' suggested that the murder missile was a poison flechette fired into the President's throat from an umbrella gun. The fatal wound occurs at Zapruder frame Z-187, with the death 6.9 seconds later at frame Z-312.

The 25-30mm tracheotomy performed 10 minutes later didn't disturb the flechette, but it had to be removed, which explains the 'pre-autopsy surgery' performed on the neck at Bethesda, resulting in a gaping wound. Cutler names the Umbrella Man as George Novel, as seen on the Zapruder film. He raises his black umbrella and turns as he pumps it up and down – all on a bright, sunny day.

The collected conference papers cost $20 in USA from Prof. Jerry D. Rose, State University College, Fredonia, NY 14063. This info. comes from Paranoia, the Conspircy Reader, P.O. Box 3570, Cranston, RI 02910.

UFO researcher William Cooper, in his book *Behold A Pale Horse*, revives an hypothesis from the 1974 book *Murder from Within*, that the Zapruder film shows Kennedy's driver, Secret Service agent William Greer, turn round and fire at the President. According to a film commentary made by one Lars Hansson: "You see the .45 automatic ... in his left hand. He's firing over his right shoulder; you see it in relief. You see his head pointing backwards towards the President. The force of the shot drives him violently backward against the back of the seat". According to Cooper, all of the witnesses who were close enough to the car to see what happened were murdered within two years.

Copies of the Zapruder film cost $30 + $4 US postage & handling from William Cooper, 19744 Beach Blvd., Suite 301, Huntingdon Beach, CA 92648.



ABOVE: The Umbrella Man waits in Dealey Plaza, his umbrella at his feet.

LEFT: Frames from the Zapruder 8mm movie – a hand-drawn copy from Life's original.

THE ASSASSINATION OF LEE HARVEY OSWALD

The famous moment on 24 November 1963 when Lee Harvey Oswald (centre) was shot in the stomach by club-owner Jack Ruby (right of centre) in the basement of the Dallas Police Department building, captured by photograper Bob Jackson.

A curious aside concerns James Leavelle, the luckless cop in the light suit and hat handcuffed to Oswald at that fateful moment. In August 1992, as part of an oral history project, Leavelle was being interviewed by former newsman Bob Porter, and Wes Wise, a former mayor of Dallas. Leavelle showed the investigators a .38 Colt Cobra (as used by Ruby) and demonstrated how his colleague Det. L.C. Graves had grabbed Ruby's arm and prevented him firing a second shot (Graves can be seen reaching in on the right of the picture).

Suddenly the gun went off, and with the camera still rolling, a shocked Leavelle quickly attended to Bob Porter's wounded right arm, while Wes Wise dialled for paramedics. "I had two guns, one loaded and one not," explained the embarrassed 72-year-old lawman. "I guess I picked up the wrong one." *Washington Times, 8 Dec 1992.*

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Tape 32. Before you know it, they cancel the Psychic Class.
Tape 16.'So you keep a secret from your own brother?'

ON MANIFESTING
Tape 05. 'If he runs out of money, so he'll call and you'll send.'
Tape 54. 'Stick to what we know - nothing ever changes!'
Tape 55. Creating guilt (includes the basic four types of shrug)

ON MELVYN
Tape 59. My life on earth, so soon already.
Tape 01. So who wants to know - Don't ask me why.

ON SHOPKEEPING
Tape 78.How to recognise people you don't know.
Tape 92. How to play the Jewish piano(stick to the high notes)
Tape 90. Pile it high, sell it cheap; for cash, forget the V.A.T.
Tape. 61. 'If God forbid Solly should lose one of his stores...'
Tape 33. How to return the suit. (If I should be so lucky)

ON ZEN
Tape 50. No letter, no call, nothing already.
Tape. 01. Why is tonight different from all other nights?

ON WORK
Tape 05. Some of us we work for a living.
Tape 47. You bring, you come, you go. (No fun like work.)
Tape 21. So, you buy the fruit, you sell the fruit.

ON POSITIVE THINKING
Tape 43. 'Sooner or later you're going to regret it.'
Tape 77. 'So who knows? - chance would be a fine thing.'

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Tape 43. How to understand the human urge to have sects.
Tape 05. How to combat truth decay with dental floss.
Tape 78. Jesus saves, Melvyn scores on the rebound.

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Tape 91. 'This is how you thank us, after everything we've done.'
Tape 40. 'For this, I'm spending three grand a term!'
Tape 55. 'Believe you me, he doesn't tell his Mother'

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Tape 60. Time is money and vice versa. (So who's counting)
Tape 51. The faster it moves, the more their is.

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Tape 81. How to make your kitchen look like it's never used.
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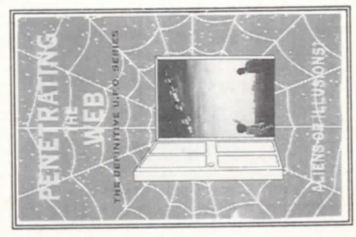

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"I see life as a continuing process. I don't have any problem with the concept of energy continuing after a body wears out."

BOB RICKARD talks to JENNY COCKELL, who claims to have transcended death to reunite the children of her former life.

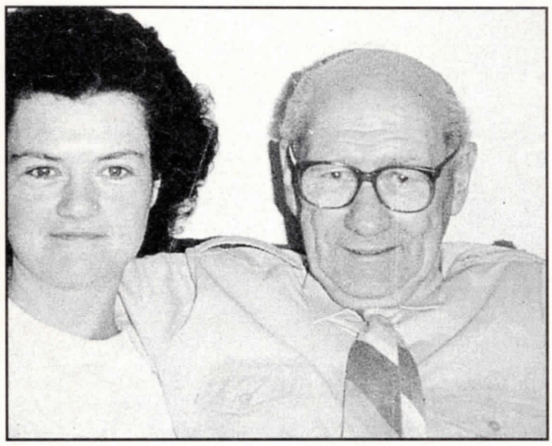
MARY'S CHILDREN

Mention reincarnation today and you are likely to be lumped with dotty spiritualists, dreamy New Agers or distant Indian peasants – yet there have always been people like Jenny Cockell whose claims to have lived before are based on direct personal experience. Since childhood she has relived the life of Mary Sutton, an Irish woman who died in 1932, leaving her eight children to fend for themselves.

Today Jenny, a 39-year-old chiropodist, lives happily in Northamptonshire with her husband Steve (a garden designer) and their two children. She seems to be the very model of sensibility – intelligent, articulate and thoughtful, and with no overt quirkiness or neuroses – as she tells you, with impressive calm and care, that she has somehow transcended death to find Mary's children and reunite them.

The story of Jenny's quest for details of her past life – how she recalled dream scraps of information which were later verified; how she located Malahide, north of Dublin, as the village where Mary lived; and how she found Mary's scattered children (only five are still living) – is told in *Yesterday's Children* (Piatkus, 1993), and was the subject of *Strange But True?*, a pilot for an ITV series on strange experiences.

It is a moving story that begins with Jenny's recurrent nightmare of Mary's death, alone in a room in Dublin's Rotunda Hospital, almost frantic with concern over the fate of her children. Their father was a soldier in World War I who made a precarious living as a scaffolder. He was moody, often drunk and absent, so the children were distributed among several orphanages. Once Jenny had located Malahide, and inquiries identified a Sutton family that fitted her recollections, it took several more years of patient research to discover the whereabouts of all but one child. She made her first contact in 1990, when Jeffrey, Mary's third child, answered an appeal in a Dublin newspaper. In 1991 and 1992, Jenny finally met the others in several family reunions.



FAR LEFT: Jenny with Sonny, now aged 72. He was Mary's eldest son and has confirmed many of Jenny's descriptions of his childhood home and life – including how he used to trap pheasants using brown paper sugar bags containing corn, and how he once brought home a live hare he had snared.

ABOVE LEFT: Mary's four sons – from the left, Jeffrey, Christy, Frank and Sonny – at their first reunion in 1985. Sonny stayed with his father when the other children went to several orphanages. Jenny's impressions of the number of children and their scattering was borne out by tracing baptismal and orphanage records.

FT: How did you come to feel that you had lived before?
JC: That's quite difficult because the memories had always been there, in detail, right from the beginning. I have memories of three previous lives going back into the historical past. It didn't worry me at all – I took it that I'd lived before and assumed that it was perfectly normal. I thought everybody did.

It was not until I went to Sunday school for the first time, with my older brother, that I realised otherwise. They talked about issues that I thought were important, like what happens after you die, but they didn't mention previous lives. I was a bit confused by this so I asked my mother and learned then that it was not normal to think this way.

It wasn't that I suddenly felt that I had lived before, but I did suddenly realise that other people couldn't remember.

FT: Your book describes your early past-life memories as nightmarish dream experiences. I have great difficulty remembering dreams, they tend to evaporate as the day progresses – so what made yours so memorable?
JC: There was only the one dream, really, and it was the same every time – a nightmare of dying and leaving my children behind. I had difficulty getting it out of my mind, in fact. It took tremendous effort to push it to one side because the intensity of feeling was almost unbearable.

But there were also other memories … If you sit down now and try to remember a childhood memory of a day at the seaside, it just pops into the mind. My memories of Mary did the same. Like ordinary memories, too, they were quite fragmented – but then your childhood memories will have bits missing. I felt I was the same person, but in a different body. It was not a fleeting one-off thing. I relived it regularly, I think, because it arose from a situation which was unresolved.

FT: How did you settle on Malahide as your former home?
JC: I had always felt the memories were connected to Ireland. One day, as a child, I felt sure that if I could look at a map of Ireland, I would know where the village was located, and match it up with the maps I had been drawing ever since I could hold a pencil. Many times, when I looked at my school atlas, I was drawn to the area north of Dublin and the village of Malahide.

FT: At what point did you decide to be hypnotised?
JC: It was long after I had verified that the town of Malahide corresponded to my own drawings. That was in 1980. It was one of those things I thought I might do one day to get some extra details. I had been fairly successful in pushing the memories to one side, but after my children were born, I found new motivation, as if having them reawakened old feelings. In late 1987, while I was saving up for a trip over to Ireland, a friend said I must come and see this chap – he was not a therapist but a researcher into past lives who used hypnosis to recover memories. I went to one of his talks and later volunteered, in 1988, to be one of his case-studies.

It all came back with such intensity – not just because I was seeing scenes during the hypnosis, but because I was thinking more about my past life. Memories were continually popping up between sessions … but this time I was an adult and able to do something about investigating them.

ABOVE: Mary Sutton in 1927, with Phyllis then aged two years. Mary died in October 1932, a month after the birth of her youngest daughter. She was alone and desperately worried about the fate of her children.

FT: What other kinds of psychic experiences have you had?
JC: Premonitions, mainly. I always knew when things happened to my younger brother. For example, the first I knew of the death of my older brother (in a gliding accident) was when my younger brother got the phonecall. I was in a motorway service station at the time and nearly fell over with the shock.

Sometimes, when my mother and I were talking, I'd go and fetch something, then we'd realise she hadn't actually named the thing she wanted me to fetch. I'm quite good at psychometry – holding an object belonging to someone and then being able to describe their feelings or other things about them. As a chiropodist holding people's feet I just have to turn off.

FT: When were you able to contact Mary's children, and how did they react to the strange story you had to tell them?
JC: I made my first visit to Malahide in 1989, and the first contact with one of the children was in 1990. It took me a long time to think about how best to approach them. I thought that explaining it gently would give me a certain amount of control, but I was caught off guard by a phone call from Mary's second son, Jeffrey. I'd placed an advert in a local newspaper – someone saw it and sent me his address.

Unfortunately, he was a little deaf, so part of our conversation went via his daughter. They re-

Mary and Jenny. There is a surprising physical likeness between the two women, despite the improbability of any genealogical relationship.

alised that I was not a direct member of the family but they weren't quite sure what my interest in them was. They gave me the addresses of two other sons. Then they asked me my connection, and I reeled back wondering what I could say without upsetting them. In the end I said it is very odd but I remember your family through dreams. They obviously weren't sure how to take this, but I later got back in touch with them and tried to explain again without actually saying "I *was* your mother." They didn't get in touch again.

It made me wonder whether I should have made contact another way, perhaps just finding out if they were all right. A month later, I managed to contact Sonny, the oldest son, who lived in England. I was *very* nervous when I phoned him, but he was brilliant. He was very direct as a boy, so I knew I had to be direct to him. I told him I'd had dreams about the old home in Malahide and the people who lived there. He challenged me to name one of the nearby roads, but I confessed to him that I had been there recently and seen a map so this was no real test.

We would have met, but the researcher for the TV documentary suggested we should keep apart until more work had been done on the background and statements had been taken. It was a good idea but incredibly frustrating. I didn't get to meet Sonny in person until about four months later.

FT: I believe that one of the girls, Phyllis, went to her priest after you contacted her, to get his opinion.
JC: Yes. He told her it couldn't be reincarnation, because the Church doesn't accept that. However, I've found the dogma on the subject to be very ambiguous. The priest suggested that it must have been the spirit of Mary acting through me to unite the family. There's an element of truth in that and it has been accepted by the family, though some of them now see it as reincarnation.

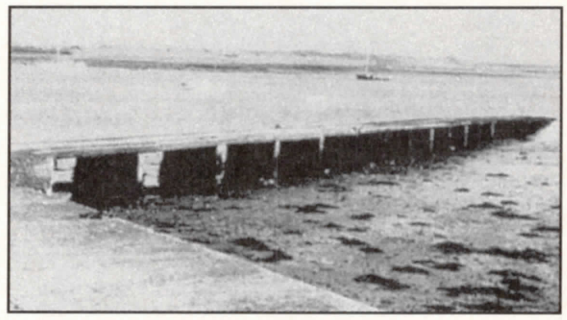
FT: Once you had reunited the children, did you feel any release from your nightmare, any sense of mission accomplished?
JC: Now that I had found them, and could look them in the eye and see they were happy and well-adjusted, it *was* a release. The fact that they were all together again made us all happy. I still hang on to them, keep contact, because they are important to me.

FT: When you met them in person, did you feel maternal, that they really were your children?
JC: Yes, I still feel like that but one step removed as it were. I stepped back almost too far, allowing them to get on with each other. The last time we met I had made room for them to make up their own minds how they interpreted the phenomenon. I didn't want to be in the way. It hadn't occurred to me how far I had stepped back until two of them, quite independently, asked me if I was going to keep in contact with them. In the end, they needed me to be there, which was wonderful.

FT: How has this experience affected your own beliefs?
JC: I have always had what you might call religious feelings – a sense of being – but without being attracted by any particular religion. There are bits of most religions that I find interesting, and other bits that I couldn't agree with.

I have been stopped by people who say "You are chosen, special." I certainly don't feel this has made me any better than anyone else – it just happened to me. I think it could happen to any of us. Maybe, in my case, I didn't finish very well. I had a strong maternal drive, and in my new life I couldn't forget the unfinished business.

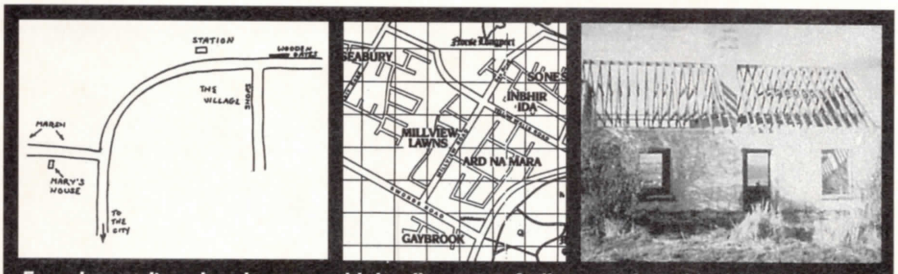
I see life as a continuing process. I don't have any problem with the concept of energy continuing after a body wears out. I'm working on another book about my memories of other lives past and future – although that should be a premonition of a future life rather than a memory of it.



In dreams, Jenny vividly recalled Mary waiting on a jetty at dusk for someone to return. Sonny later told Jenny that he once worked as a caddy at a golf course on an island and his mother would wait on this jetty for his return in his boat.

The sense of time between lives seems to be different – linear but somehow brief. I seem to have had another life in the 21 years between Mary's death and my birth – under hypnosis I had brief glimpses, and a memory of a street that later checked out.

FT: If we can have premonitions of future lives, surely this raises the thorny philosophical problem of free will? If you have a future life, have the elements of it already happened to your future self?
JC: That's the way I would have put it. Whenever I have a premonition, it feels as though it is of something that has already happened – but you don't see it until it happens or has just happened. Other people have premonitions of things apparently as they happen or seem to be happening. I think that somewhere along the line we'll have to change our concept of time.



From her earliest days Jenny would doodle maps of village roads and buildings. Later, by a mysterious psychometry while looking at maps of Ireland, she recognised the layout of Malahide north of Dublin. There she saw the names she had known from dreams and memories, especially the house called 'Gaybrook' on Swords Road. When she finally met Mary's children, they confirmed Jenny's visions of such domestic details as a particular pair of oval photographs on the wall, and violent beatings by their drunken father.

LEFT – Jenny's map, and – CENTRE – the actual Malahide. Gaybrook Lodge, today, is a crumbling overgrown ruin – similar to this Malahide cottage, RIGHT – but still recognisable to Jenny as her home between 1923 and 1932, during her life as Mary.

Several times, in the course of our chat, Jenny had referred to her personality type, which she characterised as "being an introvert with an active imagination". I wondered whether she fitted the profile, emerging from current research, of the kind of person who could invent a fantasy life for herself, inhabit it, and accept it as real. It was quickly apparent that the issue is not that simple.

Certainly Jenny presents many of the noted characteristics: besides the psychic experiences she has referred to, she readily admits to having had a rich fantasy life "including imaginary friends"; she is extremely susceptible to hypnosis (at her second session, it only took a touch on the shoulder by the hypnotist to plunge her vividly into Mary's life); and she had the almost obligatory unhappy period in childhood, when her father's depressions and violence put tremendous stress on the home. A number of recent studies have focussed upon these kind of personality traits and the role they play in claims of, for example, abduction by UFOs, multiple personalities, or abuse by satanic covens, showing, in many instances, that the claimants have demonstrably *invented* a fantasy life for themselves.

When discussing fantasy-prone personalities, I have noticed that there is a tacit assumption that the fantasiser abandons objective control or any kind of critical thought. It may be argued that Jenny's early preoccupation with Mary's death amounted to an obsession; if so, it was one which Jenny tackled with precocious common sense.

When I asked Jenny how she knew her past-life memories were real and not simply imagined, she implied that they were significantly different in tone or quality. "There was never any doubt in my mind that they were real and not fantasy," she said. "I have had no problem in influencing my ordinary dreams, controlling them almost at will. Again this was something I assumed that other people could do. I remember once trying to change the ending of my dying dream and I woke up in worse tears than usual. In trying to alter the ending I was fantasising about it. It was no use because I *knew* that I died and left the children."

Another common misconception is that high fantasisers only use the talent to escape from reality. Jenny thought that was too glib in explaining her case – her experience was neither sought nor indulged in; in fact she tried to push it away because of its overwhelming feelings of anguish and helplessness. She said: "Imagination or fantasising can be used just as well to reinforce experience. Opening up a new world can inspire you spiritually as well as imaginatively, and that also is a reward." To this we might add other unresearched motivation such as self-entertainment or curiosity, both of which can be hugely rewarding.

We are just waking up to the role of the therapist in the discovery and disclosure of fantastic personal experiences – see, for example the articles by Jim Schnabel in *FT69* and *FT70*. We do not damn *all* therapists, but it is clear that, in a significant number of cases, extraordinary tales of possession, human sacrifice, bestial abuse, genetic experimentation, demonic assaults etc have been coaxed from patients by therapists who have a prior commitment to beliefs in such things, and who have then reinforced those beliefs in their unfortunate patients. It may be that the recovery of past-life memories using hypnotic regression is similarly confabulated by a therapist who already believes reincarnation is a fact, as Jenny's hypnotist did.

Where Jenny's story confounds this thesis is in the fact that the people in her life will confirm that she talked about this other life, drew maps and pictures, and began her search long before she was exposed to a hypnotist, and long before there was objective confirmation of the many tangible details she wrested from her memory and nightmare. In the end, she *did* bring together six of the eight children who had lost touch, and they are glad she did so, even if they don't quite understand *how* she came to do it. FT

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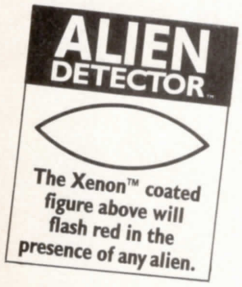

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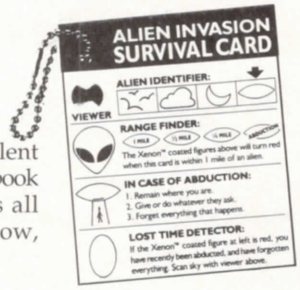

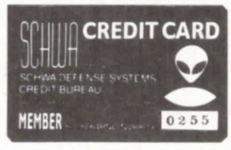

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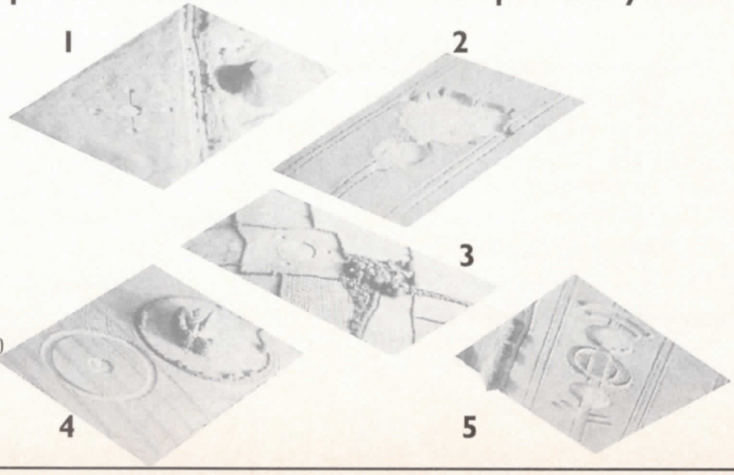

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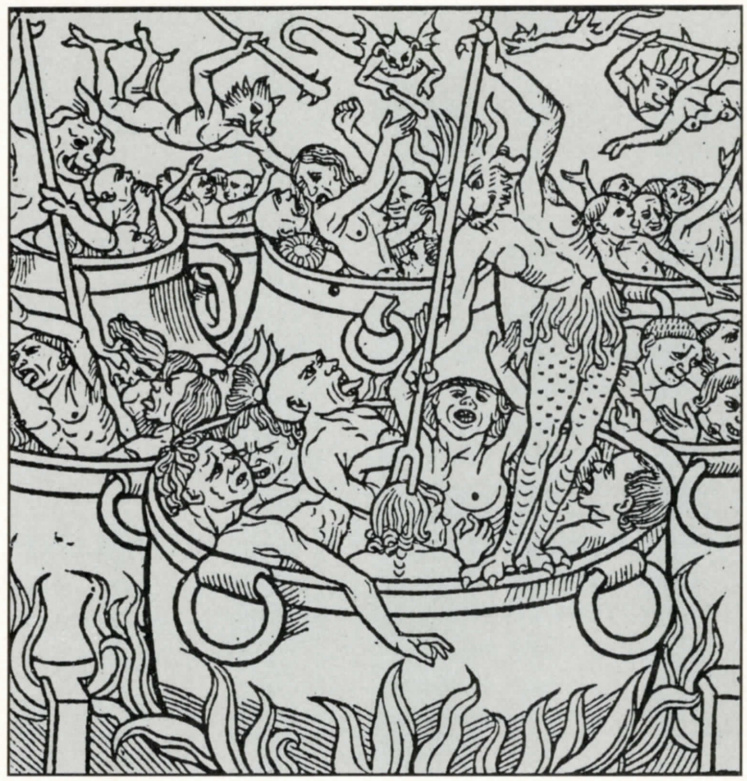


DRILLER CHILLER

Four years ago, the Christian fundamentalist press was much exercised by the story that Hell had been discovered by a drilling team in Siberia. PAUL SIEVEKING tries to excavate the roots of the rumour.

"*For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.*" *[Deuteronomy 32:22.]*

The earliest version of this outlandish yarn seems to be from the August 1989 edition of the Finnish monthly *Ammenusastia*. [1] Geologists in Siberia, under the direction of Dr Dimitri Azzakov (or Azzacov, Azzarov, Azzazov), found their drill spinning wildly at a depth of 14.4km (8.95 miles). "Our calculations indicate temperatures of 2,000 degrees F [almost 1,100 degrees C]", said Azzakov. "This is ten times higher than was anticipated." Micro-phones were lowered, and picked up the sound of a human voice screaming in pain. It sounded as if there were thousands (or millions) more screaming in the background. "Hopefully, what we found there will stay there" said Azzakov.

"Microphones were lowered, and picked up the sound of a human voice screaming in pain. It sounded as if there were thousands (or millions) more screaming in the background."

The next development comes in a letter dated 7 January 1990, from Age Rendalen Jr, "Special counsellor to the Minister of Justice of Norway" [2], who said he heard of Hell's discovery in a Trinity Broadcasting Network broadcast while visiting California. On his return to Norway, he found "the newspapers full of reports about this incident". He quotes an interview with the Norwegian Bjarne Nummedal, 65, the chief seismologist of the project, in the 4 January edition of *Asker og Baerums Budstikke*, "Norway's largest and most reputable newspaper".

The crucial additions to the story are these: Nummedal described "a fountainhead of luminous gas shooting up from the drill site", out of which, he said, came "a brilliant being with bat wings". (Variations received by Christian papers across America describe fangs, evil eyes, screeching and sky writing.) Later, Nummedal saw ambulance crews circulating in the community. One driver he

knew told him that they were supposed to sedate everybody with a drug known to erase short-term memory. Half the geologists involved in the drilling were Finnish and Norwegian. They were instantly dismissed and their lives threatened if they breathed a word about the discovery. The following day, a spokesman for the Ministry of Religious Affairs gave them all large [unspecified] bribes to keep quiet, and they were deported. Back home, Nummedal donated his bribe to charity and then told the whole story to the press.

So far, I have summarised successive reports in the Florida Christian paper, *The Midnight Cry* (April-July 1990). The story becomes more tangled when compared with other sources. *America's Promise Newsletter* from Arizona (March 1990) says that the televangelist Paul Crouch gave the Trinity Broadcasting Network report on Hell's discovery, and referred to an interview with R.J. Nummedal [sic]. In this version, the "brilliant being with bat's wings revealed itself with the words in Russian 'I have conquered' emblazoned against the dark Siberian sky." If this is the broadcast heard by Mr Rendalen, then he already knew of the Nummedal (R.J. or Bjarne) interview before his return to Norway. In any case, Mr Rendalen later repudiated his letter as a hoax (*Midnight Cry* Dec 1990). According to William P. Cheshire, editor of the *Arizona Republic*, the Foreign Press Service in Washington had never heard of the Norwegian paper that ran the Nummedal interview.

California talk show host Rich Buhler told the story of the chilling drilling in *Christianity Today* (July 1990). He referred to a letter-to-the-editor published in a Finnish newspaper written by an elderly man who thought he got his information from a Christian newsletter in California. His other reference was to a letter sent to a Texas evangelist from a *Finnish school teacher* who had heard the story while travelling in California and wrote the letter as a hoax just to see if the evangelist would use it. He did. This version, which seems to have turned the whole fishy story inside out, appeared in a report by Gustav Spohn for the Religious News Service, quoted in various US papers in August and September 1991.

Biblical Archaeology Review had an item about the subterranean horrors in its November/December 1990 issue, and the All Africa Press Service covered the story in its issue of 29 July 1991. They checked it out with a Finnish embassy official, who felt it was not true.

The basis for the whole yarn is probably the Kola borehole. (The Kola Peninsula is north of the White Sea in Soviet Lapland, just next to Finland.) The borehole is the world's deepest, started in 1970. It had gone down 12km (7.46 miles) by 1984. The drill was still encountering rock at that depth. The temperature increased by one degree Celsius every 100 metres to 3,000 metres, then by 2.5 degrees every 100 metres thereafter. At ten kilometres, it was a mere 180 degrees. The detail of the drill 'spinning wildly' may be based on the fact that the water content of the crust was much greater than expected. There were some small flows of gas, and large amounts of hot, mineralised water encountered. *Scientific American* Dec 1984, *New Scientist* 18 April 1985.

Our Finnish correspondent, Tuuri Heporauta, wired us on 5 December 1991: AMMENUSASTIA OBVIOUS HOAX POSTPONE PUBLISHING LETTER FOLLOWS. Alas, the letter never came. Tuuri died five days later from a cerebral hæmorrhage.

Notes:

1- *According to the June 1990 edition of The Midnight Cry (Box 3686, Tequesta, FL 33469), the article was written by Suome Jengi, ja Katulahetys r.y., Levasjoki 29880, Finland. Telephone 011 358 395 27105.*

2- *The address given for Rendalen is Stjerneblokkvn 20, Oslo, Norway.*

MISSING TIME

Peter Brookesmith, former editor of The Unexplained, reports on a UFO conference in Sheffield

Between 14 and 15 August this year, I mysteriously lost two days out of my life. Later, under hypnosis, I learned that I had gone to Sheffield, to the Independent UFO Network's conference *UFOs – Fact, Fraud or Fantasy*? An event that managed to provide as wide a sample of ufological wonders – or, depending on your point of view, horrors – as anyone could wish. [1]

For those interested, bewildered, infuriated or enormously amused at the current fashions among UFO buffs, it was a veritable feast, and one of the chief gurus of the present phase of the so-called 'alien abduction scenario', New York artist Budd Hopkins, came on stage for not one but two long lectures over the two-day event.

In his first address, Hopkins outlined his version of the now-famous, and much disputed, 'Linda Napolitano' (or 'Linda Cortile') case. According to Hopkins, at around 3:15 am on 30 November 1989, this 45-year-old mother of two was floated out of the *closed* window of a 12th-storey Manhattan apartment and into a waiting UFO. While this was happening, Mr 'Napolitano' slept the sleep of the just, but the event did not go unobserved.

LEFT: Linda Napolitano and Budd Hopkins RIGHT: Linda Moulton Howe

On the ground nearby, two government security agents in a limo with a 'high-ranking political figure' (who has, Hopkins says, declined to *deny* the truth of his guards' account) watched all this happen through binoculars. On Brooklyn Bridge, about a quarter-mile distant, another person, a 60-ish grandmother, saw the party of aliens, the UFO and even Mrs Napolitano being floated into it. This witness's car had mysteriously failed, and the lights on the bridge blacked out. Other cars ground to a halt around and behind her. (The limo too had apparently broken down mysteriously.) Hopkins concludes that 'the aliens' deliberately stopped these vehicles to allow their occupants to witness the abduction. The event was a *demonstration*, in short, to warn us, in particular the anonymous high-powered politician, of what 'they' can do.

Cattle-mutilation chronicler and US TV documentary-maker Linda Moulton Howe also made two appearances to elaborate her belief that aliens are as avidly removing the juicier parts of animals as Hopkins thinks they are temporarily borrowing entire humans, if for different reasons. Some curious findings emerged: that, for example, cattle mutilations appear to involve a cutting instrument that generates enough heat to cook the haemoglobin in the tissues adjacent to the 'cuts'. Further, the way tissues are utterly drained even of capillary blood is quite unlike the effects of wounding by predators.

From southern Africa, Cynthia Hind – who deserves an award for being the drollest UFO investigator on any continent – came a treatment of what she called 'anomalous' alien abductions in Zimbabwe. This began for the Moslem female victim with sinister 'bedroom visitors', who felt her head, inserted something into her ears, and repeatedly raped her. No UFO as such seems to have been involved. Cynthia Hind also described the first case, to her knowledge, of a black African (an engineer) having encounters with alien entities. The core victims in another were a white mother and daughter, abducted in the early hours of the morning in Johannesburg. One of the atypical features of the case was the benign atmosphere that permeated their otherwise degrading experience at the hands of the 'aliens': indeed neither wished to leave the abductors' UFO. Cynthia Hind's suspicion is that ufonauts are not extraterrestrial, but are from other dimensions or times.

Philip Mantle gave an immaculately concise account of UFO facts, frauds and fantasies from Yorkshire in the last decade; and Andrew Collins (the well-known psychic quester) described how he and his associates had borrowed ideas and techniques from the psychologist Wilhelm Reich, combined them with infra-red photography, and come up with some very curious results that appear, despite the eccentric methods employed, to confirm the notion that some UFOs at least are natural in origin, but *may* be sentient, intelligent, or at least responsive to human activity.

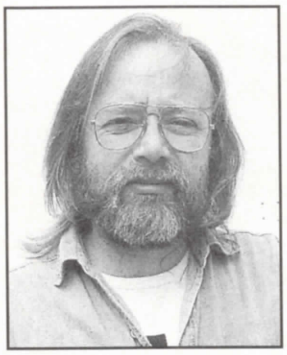
Even sceptics had their spokesmen. Hilary Evans presented a devastating thesis that *everything* in the history of UFO reports since 1947 had been anticipated by science-fiction writers between the turn of the century and 1940.

Paul Devereux, meanwhile made a hugely cogent case, with admirable diplomacy, for regarding UFO phenomena – including the notorious abduction cases – as aspects of mental and physical *natural* events, little-understood though they may be. To learn that DMT, a substance secreted by the pineal gland and found in the psychoactive plants used in shamanic societies, can produce the subjective experience of entering another universe, was intriguing enough; to learn that those taking DMT see worlds replete with alien figures, whose features are common to all reports, was a revelation. Devereux

made provocative links with this information and new data emerging from lucid dream research, and suggested that the abduction scenario (which he did not dismiss as a false *experience*) is a dramatisation of inner, individual psychological and spiritual alienation. Both these papers should set real ufologists off in genuinely interesting new directions of research. But will they?

In its way, this was all good stuff, whatever corner it came from. But a genuine ufology would look at every possible angle of a case as outlandish as Linda Napolitano's before ascribing it to 'aliens'. Not Budd Hopkins: he launched into his account without even a ritual nod toward the possibility that something else is at work here.

Nor did he make any attempt to address the radical criticisms and doubts about his technique and competence that others have made concerning this case and others he has pursued (for a brief review, see ***FT67:53***). And when one learns, from his own mouth, that he is – without qualification or training – hypnotically regressing children 'down to the age of two and a half' to ask them about their 'alien abduction' experiences, some instinct screams in protest.



ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Jenny Randles, Paul Devereux and Hilary Evans

The unshakability of Hopkins's belief in his scenario and his 'witnesses' became apparent in his second session, when he described a 1979 case in which, on a well-populated beach in Brisbane, Australia, a mother and her two children were abducted – beamed up into a UFO, it seems – leaving the father of the family paralysed, holding a camera, for an hour or more while they were away.

> "A similar tendency to find what you are looking for was evident in Jenny Randle's discovery of a window area, where 'something is distorting space and time' near her home on the Mersey estuary."

Amazingly, no one else on the beach noticed any of this. Budd Hopkins can tell you why: because all four *became invisible* during this period. To their conscious memory the husband and wife took four photographs of each other with their children. When developed, the pictures had a curious red cast, and showed the beach, but no figures. Hopkins thinks this case proves that 'aliens' can cloak their victims in invisibility and can themselves become selectively invisible (as they'd have to, to be able to abduct Linda Napolitano from right opposite the *New York Post's* busy night loading bay – a fact about that location that Hopkins mysteriously failed to mention at Sheffield).

'They were in a realm where they could see each other and the beach and everyone on it, but no one could see them," Hopkins suggested. ... An invisible man holding an invisible camera with invisible film takes a visible picture that shows what everyone else could see [ie an empty beach] ... This principle of cloaking can be switched on and off.'

The same kind of presumption lies behind Linda Moulton Howe's notion that aliens are up to something nasty with cattle (and even cats) in America's wide-open spaces. From the evidence she presented, something odd does seem to be afoot here. Even the famous black helicopters that used to swarm around these cases have become invisible now! But why aliens, and not the angry ghosts of American Indians, the spirit of the Great American Dragon, or worried Atlanteans?

A similar tendency to find what you are looking for was evident in Jenny Randles's discovery of a window area, where 'something is distorting space and time' just south of the Mersey estuary between Runcorn and Warrington. It struck me as not insignificant that this area is right on Ms Randles's home doorstep: that is, I suspect that in the last 50 years *any* small area of the British Isles will have seen a few scruffy old polts, a close encounter or two, some ghosts, a disembodied voice and a few earthlights, maybe even the occasional crop circle or mysteriously deceased cow, come and go.

Ms Randles also *seems* to have taken at face value the idea that some UFOs can't land in the wet – difficulty with 'electrical charges', you know. Funny how the aliens can hop the dimensions and make themselves invisible, but it hasn't dawned on them to abduct a few yards of terrestrial rubber.

Only two speakers really addressed the theme of the conference – 'fact, fraud or fantasy' – and they were the true sceptics, Evans and Devereux. The sight of a small but perfectly formed 'gray' appearing on the screen during Evans's address was made delightful by the news that this was an illustration from a French magazine published at the turn of the century. Or did Evans get this all wrong? Surely this is part of the insidious programme of 'education' (ie softening up) we've been subjected to over the years, that's to ready us for the Great Extra-Terrestrial Revelation? Is it hell.

The implication of Hilary Evans's address was supported by Paul Devereux: there is something in the human mind that creates consistent forms for alien figures.

But then isn't that what Alvin Lawson was saying more than a decade ago, if adducing his evidence from elsewhere? I called this piece 'Missing Time' because the last event like this I went to was in Chicago in 1982, where Dr Lawson first presented this thesis – and hardly anything in ufology has changed since.

In 1982 crashed saucers were making a comeback. Now abductions are the chic thing, on a curious parallel track with the more public fascination with child abuse in sundry horrible forms. When will the first *fashionable* 'transportee' case arise as a rebirth of the old 'contactee' myth? Before the next decade is out, I wager.

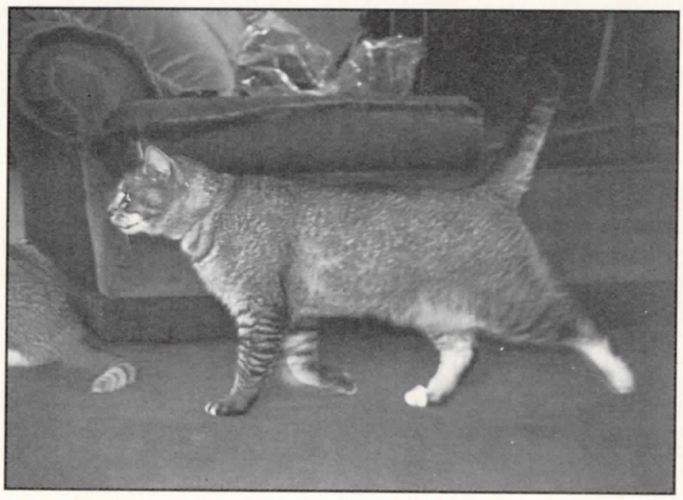
Note:
[1] *Anyone interested in what was said* ***verbatim*** *can write to Stu Smith at 15 Rydal Street, Burnley, Lancs BB10 1HS, UK, for audio or video tapes of the proceedings.*

LOVECATS: THE NEXT GENERATION

Dr Karl P.N. Shuker examines some possible jungle cat hybrids

Shortly after my Lovecats report *[FT68:50]*, examining the possibility that escapee Asian jungle cats *Felis chaus* were mating with feral domestic cats in Britain to yield fertile hybrids, I contacted Gareth B. Thomas, the vet who had examined the adult male jungle cat discovered dead close to a farm at Richards Castle, Ludlow, Shropshire, on 3 February 1989.

A few days after the examination, he told me, Mrs Jeanette Powell, living nearby at the time in the Leintwardine area, brought in a male kitten, Jasper, to be castrated. Thomas was startled to discover that this kitten was more than a little reminiscent of the jungle cat he had just examined. He took various photographs before the anæsthetic wore off.



Jasper – a jungle cat hybrid?

Considerably larger than other kittens of his age, Jasper had grey fur that lacked markings on his flanks; a very prominent black dorsal stripe running along his back to the end of his tail, which was heavily-ringed with a black tip; stripes on his limbs; black tufts at the ends of his noticeably broad-based ears; a white ring encircling each eye; white jaws; and notably large canine teeth. Although jungle cats are usually brown or fawn, grey specimens have been recorded, and the other features listed above for Jasper are typical of jungle cats, and were all exhibited by the Ludlow specimen.

Thomas learned that Jasper's mother was a grey feral domestic cat who had been tamed by Mrs Dorothy Williams of Whitton Farm (also in Leintwardine) – near to which the cat had first appeared during the mid-1980s. Known as Mother, she has given birth to several litters – including the August 1988 litter that contained Jasper. Mrs Williams told me that Mother has tufted, lynx-like ears, stripes on her limbs and tail, and ginger patches on her grey fur, but unlike Jasper she has only an average-sized body.

Apparently, Mother is one of a number of unusual feral cats in the area that are similar to the jungle cat, and which the locals call 'lynxes' or 'wild cats'. As the Ludlow jungle cat is believed to have been on the loose for up to five years, could these be hybrid descendants of this non-native escapee? Thomas considers it possible that Jasper is a second-generation hybrid descendant. His father is unknown, but the *chaus* characteristics of Mother suggest she could be one such crossbreed.

I visited Mrs Powell last May and came face to face with her enigmatic pet. A sturdy, powerfully muscular cat, he was certainly very large, weighing 14lb, but with tantalising ambiguity he recalled three different types of cat. To add to the confusion, two of these, both domestic breeds, share features of the third, the jungle cat.

Jasper's face, chest and banded limbs reminded me of the Egyptian mau, supposedly derived from an undetermined species of wild cat in ancient Egypt, a region now home both to the African wildcat *Felis silvestris lybica* and to the jungle cat. The mau shares the jungle cat's white 'spectacles', its limb striping, white 'moustache' across its jaws, tufted ears with wide bases, and heavily-ringed black-tipped tail.

Conversely, Jasper's dorsal stripe and unmarked flanks, and once again his tufted ears, resembled those of the Abyssinian cat – a very distinctive domestic breed which looks remarkably like the jungle cat. Jasper's relatively short limbs and long tail, however, were not Abyssinian features, but did resemble *chaus*. Jasper had a brother, George, who shared his distinct dorsal stripe and wide-based tufted ears, but was ginger and white, more gracile in build, with longer limbs and weighing 12lb.

If Jasper had possessed George's build, he would have looked ever more like a jungle cat; yet, even without this, it was easy to see why Thomas had been so impressed by his correspondence to this species. I learnt that over successive moults Jasper was gradually acquiring brown fur; if his grey pelage is eventually replaced entirely with brown, this will enhance his resemblance to a typical jungle cat.

Could Jasper and George really be hybrid grandsons of the Ludlow jungle cat? Or are they simply unusual pure-bred domestics whose jungle cat characteristics are due to a descent from domestic breeds such as the Abyssinian and mau that themselves resemble wild species? I asked a number of mammalian geneticists in Britain and overseas whether blood samples could determine taxonomic identity – via chromosomal analyses or DNA hybridisation. The replies were not encouraging.

No features unequivocally distinguishing the karyotype (chromosomal complement) of the jungle cat from that of the domestic cat have yet been documented, and DNA hybridisation techniques are insufficiently rigorous at present for conclusive differentiation of jungle cats, domestic cats and hybrids. As for anatomic analyses, the jungle cat has not been studied sufficiently to offer much hope either. A definitive taxonomic identification of Jasper and George will have to await scientific advances.

My thanks to Mr Gareth Thomas, Mrs Jeanette Powell and Mrs Dorothy Williams for their kind assistance.

BEDEVILLED

MIKE DASH updates our 'Satanic Child Abuse' file with a major case from New Zealand and news of some continuing cases

The United States, Britain, Australia, Canada, South Africa ... allegations of Satanic ritual abuse have been made in almost every English-speaking territory. So we were less than surprised to hear from our correspondent Peter Hassall that a case being tried in the New Zealand city of Christchurch had all the familiar elements.

Peter Ellis, 35, a worker at the Christchurch Civic Childcare Centre, stood accused of abusing up to 50 toddlers left in his care between December 1986 and May 1991. Three female workers at the centre were said to have helped him conduct weird, possibly Satanic or Masonic, rituals and terrorise their charges by locking them in subterranean mazes or in cages hung from a ceiling.

So far, so typical ... after all, three prominent US cases – the seminal McMartin pre-school scare, which collapsed in a welter of ever-more-inventive accusations, New York's Wee Care Day Nursery case and North Carolina's Little Rascals saga [see below] involved allegations of ritual abuse in the pervert's paradise of a day care centre. Where the Christchurch case differed from the majority of its precursors, though, was in the guilty verdicts delivered to Ellis and the 10-year jail sentence imposed on him for 16 'proven' charges of sexual violation, indecent assault and doing an indecent act.

Peter Ellis (left) was found guilty, but his co-workers (right) were cleared of child abuse.

The story began in November 1991 when one child attending the centre told his father he did not like his teacher's "black penis". Questioned, he said that this was "just a story", but his concerned parents turned for help to a "community consultant" who had been working at the centre. A month later, Ellis was suspended from his job. The child was then formally interviewed three times without making any direct allegations of abuse.

Concern spread rapidly through the area as parents shared fears that their own offspring might also be victims. The local police conducted an investigation which was concluded without charges being brought, but three months later, in March 1992, Ellis was arrested and booked on the first of what became 45 indecency charges. On 3 September, the crèche was closed after the Ministry of Education revoked its operating licence.

The Christchurch case followed three years of growing concern at the scale of child sexual abuse in New Zealand, beginning with a 1988 telethon in aid of abuse victims and gathering pace with the heavily-publicised allegation by two female psychiatrists that as many as one in four New Zealand girls were being abused.

Social workers investigating Ellis, led by the appropriately-named Dr Karen Zelas, conducted dozens of interviews and concluded "the children had a general fear of Peter Ellis and ... he has handled them roughly." But by then, more specific allegations of abuse were beginning to emerge.

A mass of complainants (13 in all) laid more than two dozen charges concerning the abuse of 20 of the 116 children interviewed by the authorities (police said over 50 infants had made allegations), and the sheer weight of evidence meant things looked bleak for Ellis.

Many of the charges were levelled by one six-year-old, already in therapy before the case began, whose story unfolded over a series of five lengthy interviews. At first the child's allegations centred on straightforward sexual abuse in the crèche toilet, but the story gradually became more bizarre: 'Peter' had made him eat 'poos', had dressed as a witch and threatened to turn his victim into a frog if he told anyone what was going on.

During the third interview, the child told of being thrust through a trapdoor into a maze where he was accosted by two of Ellis's 'friends', called Spikehead and Boulderhead; during the fourth he said children from the crèche had been made to stand naked in a circle drawn on the floor of Ellis's house. Slit-eyed adults playing guitars stood outside the circle; they carried magic knives, wore white suits and pretended to be cowboys. After the ceremony, the adults put the children into ovens and pretended they would be eaten.

Asked why he had not mentioned these details earlier, the boy replied: "Oh, I just remembered today."

Familiar doubts were expressed at the conduct of many of the interviews. Several other children were interviewed two or three times, a process later described by Harris's

prosecutors as 'peeling the onion' to get at the core of each supposed victim's experience, and by the defence as 'softening up' of confused, bored and inconsistent witnesses. Impossibilities and contradictions in the children's stories were never cleared up, and police said they were worried by parents asking their children leading questions before the formal interviews.

Much was also made, by the press at least, of the community consultant who had made the initial allegations against Ellis. She, it was revealed, was the co-founder of a private abuse therapy organisation called START and had long been interested in cases of child sexual abuse.

The case finally came to court in April 1993, and both prosecution and defence argued their cases along lines familiar to anyone who followed US and British ritual abuse cases. According to the Crown, its child witnesses (who were aged between three and five when the alleged abuse took place) gave details no toddler could have made up. The defence contended that their allegations emerged from lengthy and leading questioning conducted by desperately anxious parents, and pointed to a complete lack of generally acceptable physical evidence.

The two month court case ended when the jury found Ellis guilty on 16 of 25 charges (the acquittals concerned charges that children had been assaulted with needles and sticks) and the judge, noting that the verdicts were "obviously correct", sentenced the defendant to a decade in gaol. Ellis's female co-workers were discharged early on when the judge decided there was not enough evidence to proceed against them.

"I don't blame the children at all," said Debbie Gillespie, one of the four women. "They don't think they are actually lying. They are emotionally manipulating their parents. Every time they disclosed they would get these cuddles, they would get to stay up past their bedtime and get told, 'We love you, you're a brave boy.'"

Ellis immediately announced plans to appeal against his sentence, but we have heard nothing since.

SHARK SENTENCE

In Farmville, North Carolina, meanwhile, Robert Kelly has finally been found guilty of some of the 183 charges of Satanic pædophilia he was accused of committing at his Little Rascals day-care centre [***FT60:35*** and ***FT71:24***].

He received 12 consecutive life sentences for his crimes, despite the pleas of three jurors who refused to believe tales of children fed to tanks full of ravenous sharks (Jim Schnabel gives further details in his article last issue), and his wife Betsy is shortly due to stand trial as an accomplice.

LEFT: Robert Kelly

ABOVE: Betsy Kelly

The *Daily Telegraph* columnist Claudia FitzHerbert, who has joined the *Independent's* Rosie Waterhouse as a regular critic of the abuse scares, drew attention to a little-remarked, but potentially enormously important, detail of this case. "Neither the fundies nor the feminists appear to have had anything to do with the case," she observed, "but Betsy Kelly feels there is some significance in the fact that most of the accusations came from mothers who did not work, and determined to destroy the day care centre for complicated reasons of their own."

"Her tale tallies with others I have heard, of a new militancy among stay-at-home mums. 'Maternal correctness' involves the banding together of women who have forgone their careers for the sake of their children and are consumed with loathing for their less sacrificial sisters. They drive cars with 'The Mom' number plates and persecute working mothers with anonymous telephone calls detailing their children's inadequacies. That they are now banding together is very bad news indeed."

PEANUT BITTER

Further up the Atlantic seaboard, New Jersey child care centre worker Kelly Michaels was recently released from prison after serving four years of a 47-year sentence for abusing dozens of infants at the Wee Care Day Nursery in Maplewood.

Michaels, who was alleged to have raped the toddlers with cutlery, licked peanut butter off their genitals and forced them to eat 'cakes' of her fæces, was released after an appeal court ruled she had not had a fair trial. The judge questioned whether the elaborate ritual abuse Michaels was supposed to have committed over a three-year period would have been possible in a busy church.

ORKNEY SAGA

Britain's longest-running and most bitterly-disputed ritual abuse case also reached some sort of conclusion earlier this year with the suspension and eventual resignation of Paul Lee, the director of the islands' tiny social services department. He was given a bumper £57,000 kiss-off.

Lee, whose suspension on full salary was ordered at a closed meeting of the Orkney Islands council, was paying the penalty for ordering dawn raids in which nine children were taken from their homes after allegations that they had been regularly abused by a Satanic coven led by a local priest, the Reverend Morris McKenzie [see ***FT57:50***]. McKenzie (an elderly man with a heart condition) was alleged to have stripped naked in the biting Orkney winters and abused his charges during rituals in an abandoned quarry.

Sadly, McKenzie himself became a victim of the case at roughly the time his chief accuser was clearing his desk. In May he took early retirement and announced he was leaving the islands, still bitter he had been unable to formally clear his name. "As a Christian minister I ought to be able to forgive – but I can't yet," he admitted.

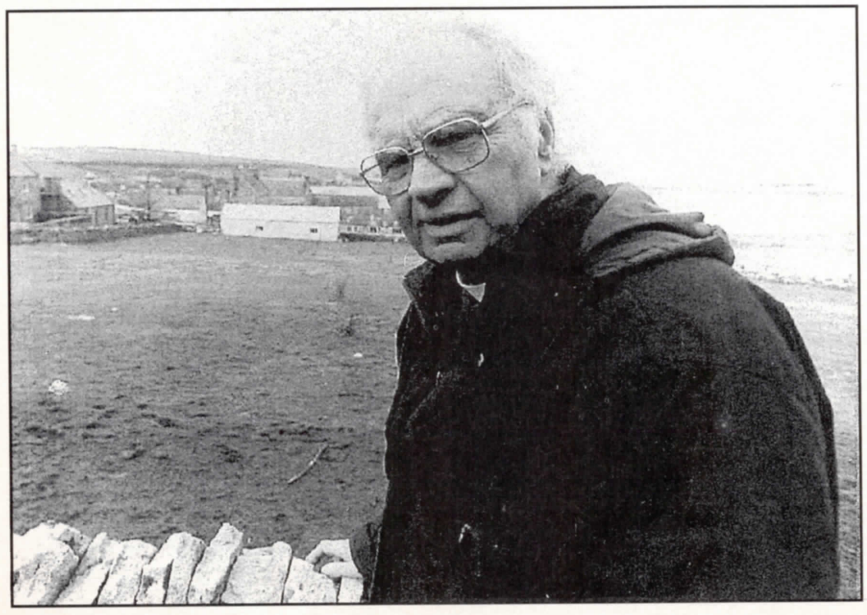
Also facing an uncertain future are the eight Orkney children 'uplifted' from their schools by social workers in November 1990. They belonged to a single "large and unruly" local family, the father of which had received a prison term for sexually abusing a daughter ... and it was constant questioning of these children that eventually produced the accusations that led to the seizure of the more famous nine in February 1991.

Two of the girls responsible for the original allegations have now given details of the methods social workers used to extract 'evidence'. "I was put in a room with a piece of paper and a pen and told to write down what had happened, and if I didn't write it down I wasn't coming out," one said. "I got bribed with a pair of new shoes. I was told that if I said something more I could have two pairs."

Almost three years on, seven of the original eight are still in care, their mother's access to them has been cut, and one has become involved in solvent abuse. Only when the children turn 16 are they free to leave their foster families and return home.

The consequences of the Orkney case are beginning to affect social services nationwide with the publication in late July of a White Paper entitled *Child Care Policy and Law*. It encompasses recommendations made by Lord Clyde after his enquiry into the Orkney affair, the most significant of which strictly controls an authority's option to 'uplift' children, and outlaws the notorious dawn raids.

Paul Lee, Witchfinder General of the Orkneys.
BELOW: Rev. Morris McKenzie, victim of the witch-hunt.



NORTHOLT NEWS

Yet another British ritual abuse case made headlines briefly in June, but by now the press had learned the lesson of earlier debacles. The story made its cautious appearance on the home news pages, rather than splashed on the front cover, and there was no mention of satanism – just abuse and "unpleasant practices connected with witchcraft" in a church in Northolt, Middlesex, the previous Hallowe'en.

On the stand at the Old Bailey were the father, uncle, aunt and grandfather of a 10-year-old girl who described a catalogue of abuse at the hands of the accused, including rape, buggery and indecent assault. The main defendant was her father, whom she accused of sexually abusing her from the age of three.

Several years later, she went on, she was taken to a 'devil church', where she was stripped, tied up, and abused by adults wearing black cloaks and balaclavas. "They used to have pictures of ghosts and stuff," she added.

Cross-examined on a video link, the girl said seven children were involved in the rituals, performed by around 20 adults. Two girls had tried to commit suicide to escape the group, and a boy was dangled by his ankles from an open window to force him to agree to perform sex acts on an adult. The girl denied she had fabricated the accusations after watching horror videos. If the outcome of this case has been reported, no news or clipping has reached us.

SUBTERRANEAN SUBMARINE

This summer has been a bonanza for submarines. STEVE MOORE reviews four discoveries.

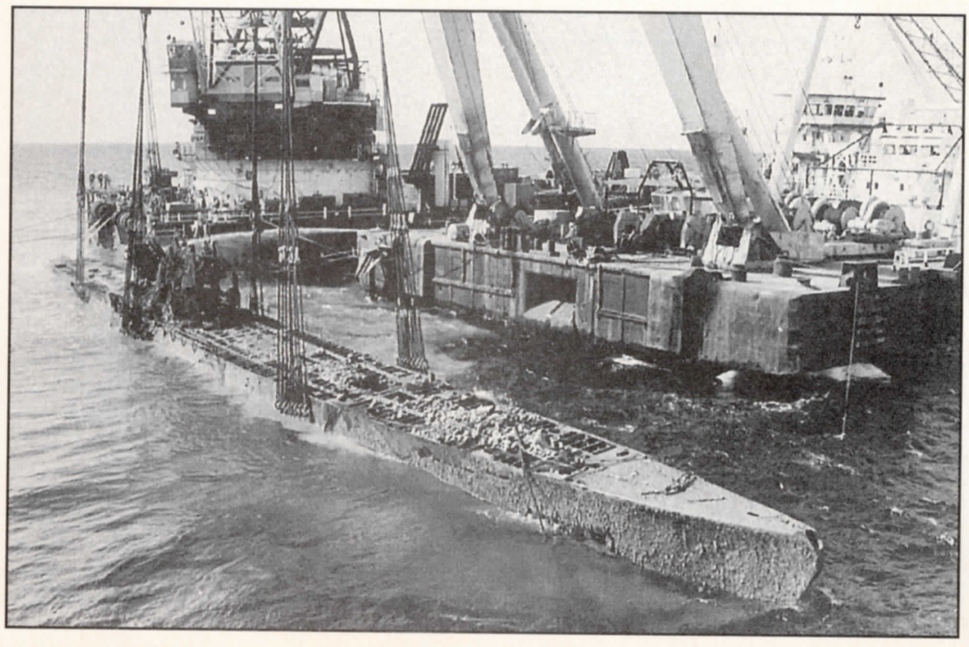
It sounds like one of *those* stories: *"Turkish Miners hit German Sub"*... but it seems that very thing happened at the beginning of September, in the village of Akpinar on the Black Sea coast. In a large open-cast pit, an excavator was working through sand and lignite when it hit the U-boat, buried in a dry sand wall between the mine and the sea, 15 feet below sea level. Working back into the wall, the small submarine was uncovered, complete with loaded torpedo tubes. At this point, archæologists will probably start to weep...

Turkey's version of the SAS blew up the live torpedoes, then spent three days digging through the wreckage and piling up the contents on the sand: wooden lockers, lead basins, leather boots, human bones, a plaque in German script, a serial number tag possibly dated 1902 and a fountain pen inscribed *Der Kimmelstiel*. It seems that an explosion had twisted the metal deck and fire had charred everything inside. But how the submarine, presumably a UB or UC class boat on active service in World War I, ended up in the mine is a mystery ... and likely to stay that way. There being no sign of treasure to be found, what remained of the submarine was scooped out of the sand by an excavator and, presumably, dumped.

This, however, is only the latest in a rash of U-boat discoveries. In June, the *U1226* was found by divers four miles off Cape Cod, Massachusetts, with the remains of 50 sailors and spies aboard. She had been sunk by an allied bomber in October 1944, on its way to drop the spies on the coast.

In July, the *UB30* was found in 160 feet of water, three miles off Whitby, N. Yorkshire. She was sunk on 13 Aug 1918 after being rammed by an armed trawler, the *John Gilman*, and hit by shore batteries and depth charges. The remains of up to 20 sailors are said to be on board, and the 121-foot-long, 257-ton vessel is reported to be in 'perfect condition'.

On 23 August, salvagers raised the 230-foot-long *U534* from the seabed near the Danish island of Anholt, where she had lain since being sunk by a British Liberator bomber on 5 May 1945. Being part of the long-range 33rd Flotilla which specialised in runs to Japan, expectations were high of finding treasure, documents and possibly the remains of high-ranking Nazis, fleeing in the last days of the war. After six tons of torpedoes and ammunition were removed, examination began. No treasure or Nazis so far, but 100 bottles of vintage wine have been found, almost 2,000 condoms ... and a safe which is apparently stuffed with documents, diaries and film canisters. It seems that although the rest of the sub was flooded, the diaries and documents were stuffed into the safe so tightly they remained sealed and are mostly legible. Whether they'll contain any surprises remains to be seen.



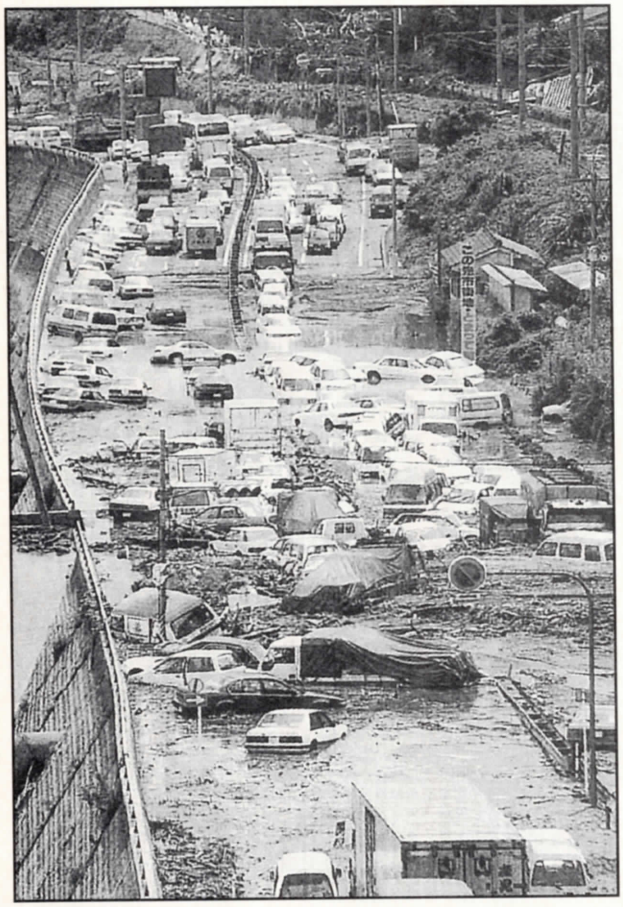
Independent, 27 July, 24&25 Aug, 8 Sept; D.Telegraph, 12 June, 27 July; Times & Sunday Times, 24 Aug; NY Post, 23 Sept 1993.

ABOVE: Turkish workers uncover the German U-Boat found on 4 September 1993 in a mine at Kemerburgaz, on the edge of the Black Sea, 40km from Istanbul. LEFT: Another German submarine, 'U534', being raised in the Kattegat Sea off Denmark on 23 August 1993.

DIARY OF A MAD PLANET

August - September 1993

This diary aims to record, in two-month segments, the geophysical highlights of our planet: the tempests and tantrums, the oddities and extremities.



LANDSLIDES ***7 August JAPAN: Vehicles stranded after torrential rain triggered landslides in Kogoshima on the southern island of Kyushu. Some 80 people were killed in southern Japan during July and August as the country experienced the coldest and wettest summer since the war.***

FLOODS 30 July MISSOURI: The Midwest flooding [see ***FT71:47***] lifted and carried downstream over 50 coffins from the cemetery in Hardin, western Missouri, some ending up 10 miles away, snagged in trees and bushes, some of them open.

A survey found that 18% of Americans believed the floods were "God's punishment on the people of the US for their sinful ways". *Plus ça change...*

EARTHQUAKE 8 August MARIANA ISLANDS: (12.97N 144.74E) 8.0R, 61km down. The world's strongest quake since an 8.2R event in the South Pacific in May 1989. Extensive damage on Guam, 48 injuries and a general power outage. Moderate tsunami and heavy damage of port facilities. (Japan's 12 July earthquake [see ***FT71:47***] moved Okushiri island about two yards westward.)

HAIL 9 August FRANCE: At least 100 vehicles were damaged by tennis-ball-sized hailstones in a freak 10-minute storm outside Lyon. Steve Edington and his family, returning to Lincolnshire, had their Ford Sierra badly battered and all the windows smashed. Equally large hailstones fell in the Dordogne region on 15 August.

FLOODS 12 August UKRAINE & BELARUS: Heavy flooding from weeks of rain increased background radiation levels in areas stricken by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster – between 19 and 24 curies per week in the Dniper River, for instance.

SWARM 13 August POLAND: An unprecedented mosquito plague hit the northwestern coast, clearing the beaches and endangering drivers. The insects fell like rain in Szczecin province, near the German border.

Meanwhile, Pakistan faced its most serious locust attack in 30 years.

DROUGHT 20 August AUSTRALIA: Thousands of hungry emus moved south from drought areas in New South Wales and Queensland. Mobs of up to 300 of the four-foot, flightless birds damaged crops and jeopardised road traffic.

FLOOD 27 August CHINA: A dam burst at the Gouhou reservoir in the remote western Qinghai province, wiping out several villages and killing more than 240 people. Another 150 were missing. The reservoir, in the Hainan Tibet prefecture, was holding about 92 million cubic feet of water.

SWARM 21 September CHINA: A Chinese oil tanker was attacked by a swarm of millions of dragonflies in the Yellow Sea. A frightened crewm an jumped overboard. Lookouts had sighted an 'obstruction' five miles long by two miles wide skimming quickly towards the tanker.

EARTHQUAKE 29 September INDIA: (18.05N 76.42E) 6.3R, 6km down. Deathtoll: 10,000 (official), 30,000 (media). Extreme devastation in Latur-Osmanabad area of Maharashtra. Khilari (pop. 18,000) destroyed. Felt in Bombay, Hyderabad and Madras.

Special thanks to the Global Seismology Group of the British Geological Survey for the earthquake data.

SECRET COUNTRY

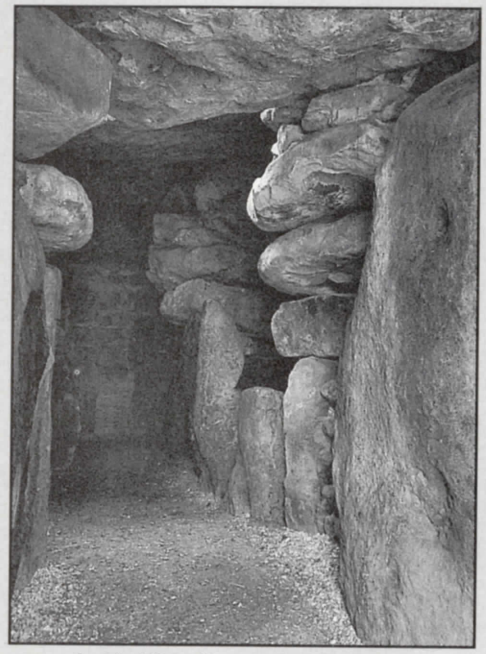
Mysterious places to visit in Great Britain compiled by Janet & Colin Bord

11: Silbury Hill and West Kennet long barrow

These two sites form part of a tight nexus of major enigmatic monuments including Avebury Henge, Kennet Avenue (standing stones), the Sanctuary (once the site of a circular wooden building), and Windmill Hill (the largest British causeway enclosure yet found).

Silbury Hill is the largest prehistoric man-made mound in Europe, 130 feet high and covering over five acres. It has been estimated that it took 18 million man-hours to construct. The hill's significance is still hotly debated; archæologists have failed to prove that it was built as a tomb for a high-ranking chieftain. Other suggestions include a gigantic sundial, with a large pole erected on the top – though why go to all the trouble of building a huge mound for this purpose? Michael Dames in his book *Silbury Treasure* (now available again in paperback from Thames & Hudson) saw Silbury as a representation of the winter goddess.

In 1776, the Duke of Northumberland got Cornish tin miners to dig a shaft down from the summit and in 1849 a tunnel was dug into the centre from the base, and this was re-excavated by Professor Richard Atkinson in 1968-70, but no trace of a burial was found (though it may still await discovery). Something was learned of Silbury's construction, however. The first phase dates from 2500BC, when a 16ft mound was built. It was soon enlarged; then the plan was changed and a much larger mound was constructed in steps. Finally, the steps were filled in to give a smooth slope.



Inside West Kennet long barrow

According to legend, Silbury is the burial place of King Sil, who is somewhere inside, upright and on horseback, wearing golden armour, or in a golden coffin; or it was a load of soil dumped by the Devil, who abandoned his plan to bury Avebury (or Devizes) when he met a man (who was in fact a cobbler carrying his work with him) who said he had worn out a sackful of shoes while coming from there; or the Devil made the hill when he wiped his spade while building the Wansdyke.

At one time it was the custom for local people to gather on top of the hill on Palm Sunday, and there to consume fig cakes and sugared water. In recent years, it has been a centre of crop circle activity, which has led to a body of modern folklore: the Devil has been supplanted by extraterrestrials.

On a crest of a hill overlooking Silbury lies West Kennet long barrow, one of Britain's finest chambered tombs. It is Neolithic, more than 320ft long and 8ft high, made largely of earth. A stone passage runs 33ft into the mound at its eastern end. There are two small chambers either side of the passage and one at the end, all of which contained burials. Forty-six burials have been found and there is evidence that many more remains were removed in the 17th century, some by Dr Toope of Marlborough who used the bones to make medicines. Also found were flints, beads, animal bones and pottery, the dating of which indicates that the tomb was in use for about 1,000 years. The only recorded belief connected with this once-important place is that the ghost of a priest enters the barrow at sunrise on Midsummer Day, followed by a ghostly white dog with red ears. FT

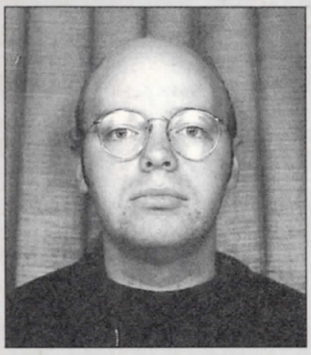
Silbury Hill

LOCATION

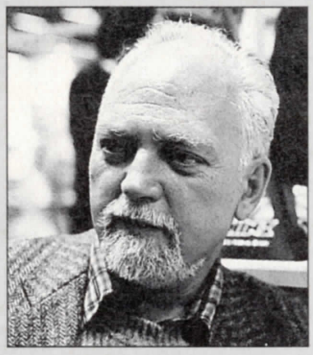
Beside the A4, 5 miles west of Marlborough, and just south of Avebury. Silbury Hill: SU 100685. West Kennet long barrow: SU 104677

Janet and Colin Bord are authors of Mysterious Britain, The Secret Country, Alien Animals, The Atlas of Magical Britain, and modern Mysteries of Britain among many others

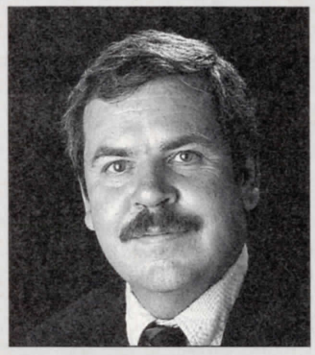
FORUM



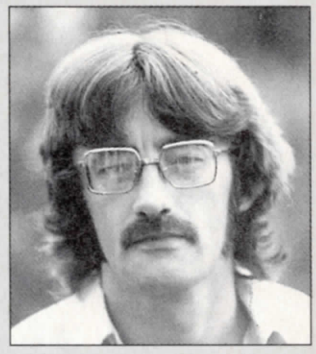
GENETICS
Anthony McLuskey is a genetic scientist from Glasgow



PHENOMENOLOGY
Robert Anton Wilson is a prolific American trickster and author best known for his sf trilogy with Robert Shea, *Illuminatus!*



SCIENCE WATCH
Dennis Stacy, a freelance journalist living in Texas, edits the monthly *Journal* of MUFON, the largest UFO organisation in the US.



FOLKLORE
Michael Goss writes about folklore and mysteries. He has compiled a bibliography on poltergeists and a book on phantom hitch-hikers

GENETICS

Cloning Recipes

Anthony McLuskey explains why he won't be producing living dinosaurs

I'm a genetic scientist, and everyone seems to think that I want to take over the planet with my specially-engineered, super-powered *Jurassic Park* T-rex clones. No, I'm not paranoid: people actually think that I spend my time making two-headed babies, nasty die-bastard viruses and the like.

People assume that we geneticists have god-like powers. The reasoning goes like this: "They're always saying that DNA is the blueprint for making a human-being. It's very easy to follow a blueprint, so it must be easy to change it into something else, if you want, right?" Wrong. The blueprint thing is a misleading analogy. It's more useful to think of the genome as a *recipe* for a human.

Think of it like this: you've got a book that has the recipes for a five-course meal, comprising a starter, soup, main dish, sweet and after-dinner thingy. Now come the complications. First of all, the recipes are all in a foreign language. You can follow the instructions, step by step, but you have no idea what it is you are making, and won't know until you eat it. This would be OK if the recipes were in sequence, but they aren't. They're all mixed up. There's worse. The recipes aren't set out nicely on separate pages, but are joined together by gibberish sentences which can't be separated from the recipes. There's gibberish *inside* the recipes as well. Like this:

"A large onion, a pound of chicken pieces, a half pint of – cludgy coloured sproggets for the large nippled onions of Bingo land! Aha cries Rodney, it's time for my – chicken stock."

Except, of course, that there's no punctuation, all the words are run together and it's all in a foreign language which you don't understand. What's more, you get bits of one recipe stuck in the middle of another.

The individual recipes are the genes, made up of DNA. The words are made up of the letters A,T,C and G, which correspond to molecules called *nucleotides*, which are attached to the DNA and spell out three-letter words called *codons*. It is the order of these codons which make up the so-called sequence of the gene. The bits of the sequence that make up the message are called the *exons* and the gibberish bits are called the *introns*.

> **"The idea that *anyone* can alter the DNA sequence in order to make superhumans is just a load of nonsense."**

The above describes the composition of a genome encoding five genes, whereas the human genome has approximately 50,000 genes, of which scientists understand about one per cent – if we're lucky. A big problem is there can be lots of genes which are pretty much alike, but are found in different cell types. Genes also switch themselves on and off as the organism ages, as if by magic.

The development of the fœtus is still largely a mystery. Oh, you'll hear scientists on *Equinox* talking about 'developmental switches', 'differential expression patterns', 'gastrulation', 'neuralation' and the like, but don't be fooled. They really don't know what the hell is going on, any more than you do. The idea that *anyone* can alter the DNA sequence in order to make superhumans, or take a sample of Hitler's blood and use it to make lots of little cloned Hitlers in a jar, or even (I'm afraid, Mr Spielberg) get some T-rex DNA, put it into a frog and make a new little dinosaur, is just a load of nonsense.

What we want to do is help people: finding cures for cancer and AIDS, and genetic diseases like cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy. We want to help feed the world by making crops that can survive under conditions of extreme heat and/or cold; by improving yield and making our plant friends less susceptible to destructive viruses and insects.

Science fiction is just that: fiction. We can't bring back the dinosaurs. Scientists are not the demi-gods that you see at the movies, but ordinary people – some nice guys and gals, some bastards and some absolutely *barking mad*.

Preposterous Perception

Robert Anton Wilson plays cat-and-mouse with hypno-hype

The doctrine of Preposterous Perception holds that almost all of us see crazy and 'unbelievable' things most of the time – almost *all* the time – even when we're not on acid. Why don't we remember this? Because we repress the memory in order to fit into a repressive society. Many experts vehemently deny that PP exists at all. Other experts claim that denying PP marks one as akin to those who deny the Greenhouse Effect or the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

In fact, the whole PP feud has opened a 'can of worms' that begins to look more like a can of cobras. We face here the almost unthinkable question: Who has the objectivity to distinguish scepticism (in the scientific sense) from denial (in the neurotic sense)? Or even from denial (in the legal sense)?

Perhaps the problem began with Whitley Streiber. As Prof. H.H. Sheissenhosen (University of Heidelberg) has written, "Maybe somewhere out in space, in a galaxy far away, some especially perverted little aliens do exist. Maybe these vicious little buggers (I speak precisely) occasionally get their hands or tentacles on some especially nefarious drug.

"*Maybe* after these aliens have all become totally 'wasted', one of them cries, 'Hey, fellas, let's hop in the flying saucer and buzz over to Earth and have another go at some of that sweet Whitley Streiber ass.' And *maybe* they all whizz across billions of light-years just to ram the poor man's rectum with weird instruments one more time.

"*Maybe*. Nonetheless, some doubts arise in any dispassionate contemplation of this scenario."

Dr David Jacobs, on the other hand, insists that, after careful study of extraterrestrial sexual abuse, he believes these people have indeed literally suffered alien rape, an experience so much more traumatic than ordinary rape that most victims block out the memory entirely – until Dr Jacobs skillfully helps them recall it.

Do these hypnotic visions belong in the category of the real or the hallucinatory? Don't expect me to answer such questions. Maybe "the Shadow knows", but I'm as uncertain as Hamlet after he encountered what seemed to him a possible appearance of his father's ghost.

Perhaps the *real* Memory Mystery began not with these Alien Abductors but with the McMartin Pre-School follies in Southern California in 1983 which kicked off the Satanic child-abuse business. Sociologist Jeffrey Victor has written that at least 33 'rumor panics' similar to the McMartin case have occurred in 24 states in the last decade.

The False Memory Syndrome Association, funded by sceptical psychotherapists and families who have been on the receiving end of bizarre accusations, attempts to educate the public about the simple fact that many 'memories' – even (or some would say especially) those activated under hypnosis – do not always correspond with real events in real space-time.

"Do these hypnotic visions belong in the category of the real or the hallucinatory? Maybe 'the Shadow knows'".

Dr Jean Piaget, generally considered the world's leading authority on developmental psychology, has recounted how he 'remembered' an alleged (non-violent and non-sexual) event in his childhood all his life – until he learned that he had only *heard* about it from his parents, who *heard* it from a maid, who had invented it to avoid admitting a minor malfeasance.

At this point Preposterous Perception appeared in the literature, thanks to Prof. Timothy F.X. Finnegan of Trinity College, Dublin. I should mention at once that Prof. Finnegan serves as President of CSI-CON – the Committee of Surrealist Investigation of Claims of the Normal – and has developed, in several books, the system known as Patapsychology (not Parapsychology, although that error seems ubiquitous). Scholars trace Patapsychology to Alfred Jarry's Pataphysics and Jacques Derrida's Deconstructionism, but Prof. Finnegan has always insisted he got his basic inspiration from one Sean Murphy of Dalkey. Murphy's First Fundamental Finding states succinctly: "I have never met a normal man or woman; I have never experienced an average day."

The Patapsychological 'school' holds that Preposterous Memories do not have any less 'validity' than other memories, since (in de Selby's words) "All that we know derives from our own perceptions, which a thousand well-known experiments have proved fallible and uncertain, and from the instinct to gossip, sometimes called Public Opinion, which sociologists now consider equally unreliable."

In Finnegan's own words (*Archæology of Cognition*, p.23), "A world where most men prefer sex with little children to sex with grown women, mostly allegedly Christian parents secretly engage in bloody Satanic rituals and every third person has suffered anal, genital and other harassments by demonic dwarves from Outer Space makes just as much sense – and just as little sense – as a world where the universe is run by the ghost of a crucified Jew and George Bush had rational reasons (which nobody can now remember) for bombing Iraq again two days before leaving the White House."

FORUM is a column for anyone with something to say about a particular field, theory or incident. If you'd like to join in with an opinion on any area of Forteana, send it to the editorial address. Ideal length: 500-1000 words. Please enclose an SAE, a three-line biography and a head-and-shoulders photo of yourself, preferably in black and white.

Roswell the Terrible

Denis Stacy looks into the most famous 'Crashed Saucer' case

Among the most interesting type of UFO reports are the so-called crash/retrievals, in which witnesses, usually with a military background or connections, report seeing a crashed saucer on the ground which is subsequently spirited away by the 'authorities', also commonly military in nature.

The most famous of crashes is the one said to have happened near Roswell, New Mexico, in the first week of July 1947, within a couple of weeks of what is considered the beginning of the modern UFO era. Although the case didn't receive widespread attention until 30 years later, it was initially announced in an official US Army Air Force press statement released within days of its discovery. "The many rumors regarding the flying discs", read the opening sentence, "became a reality yesterday when the intelligence office of the 509th Bomb Group [the world's only then extant atomic bomb wing] of the Eighth Air Force, Roswell Army Air Field, was fortunate enough to gain possession of a disc through the cooperation of one of the local ranchers and the Sheriff's office of Chaves County."

The press release went round the world, but before the media could pursue the story of the century, a press conference was called in Fort Worth, Texas (several hundred convenient miles from Roswell) where the military authorities admitted – "Whoops!" – it had all been a magnificent mistake. The flying disc was a weather balloon, pieces of which were spread over the office floor of Brigadier General Roger Ramey, Eighth Air Force commander, for reporters to inspect and photograph. In pictures, the UFO 'wreckage' looked like an aluminium foil kite that might have been caught up and spat out by a tornado.

What gives Roswell its legs is the now more than 200 first- and second-hand sources interviewed over the last decade who support the contention that the weather balloon story was just that: a clever cover-up aimed at getting the press off the Army's back. According to many of these sources, which include local townsfolk, retired pilots, intelligence agents and even one general, the real wreckage – assumed to be extraterrestrial in nature – was flown to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, now Wright-Patterson, home of the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC). The uncertainty about what really happened at Roswell has fuelled a cottage industry of articles, monographs, books, videos and movies.

Roswell is merely the most notorious of such cases. In the July/August issue of the *International UFO Reporter*, editor Jerome Clark lists a total of 38 early crash claims, beginning with an 'event' in September 1862 in the Indian Ocean, which Clark considers spurious. In fact, Clark concludes that none of the 12 cases that date from 'The Airship Era' (c.1862-97) are credible. The most famous of these – the crash of a large airship near Aurora, Texas, on 17 April 1897, along with the body of a pilot said to be 'not of this earth' – Clark calls "One of the great UFO hoaxes".

"How many 'UFO crashes' have there been? UFO alarmists like John Lear suggests that there may have been 80 or more."

The Aurora airship allegedly collided with the windmill of Judge J.S. Proctor before exploding and killing the pilot (thought to be from Mars), who was then buried in the town cemetery. Attempts to locate the grave were in vain, although there *was* a Judge Proctor in Aurora at the time... but he didn't have a windmill.

Fortean lexilinkers will be interested to learn that four more Proctors were pivotal witnesses at Roswell. Floyd and Loretta Proctor were nearest neighbours of Mac Brazel, the anonymous rancher mentioned in the initial press release. It was Brazel who first found the debris in a field (not an intact disc as implied), while in the company of Timothy Proctor, seven, younger brother of Norris. Brazel reportedly showed the other Proctors a few pieces of the unusual debris he picked up, but they declined at least two offers to accompany him back to the site. (See *UFO Crash at Roswell* by Kevin Randle and Donald Schmitt.)

How many 'UFO crashes' have there been? Discounting the 12 Airship Era cases, Clark came up with 26 separate possibilities. UFO alarmists like John Lear (son of William, developer of the Lear jet) bruit that there may have been 80 or more. A slightly more conservative ufologist, Leonard Stringfield, has identified at least 49 candidates, 16 outside the US, 27 inside, the others unknown. 1952 seems to have been the most 'popular' year for UFO crashes so far, with eight on record. In fact, all but 13 of Stringfield's extraterrestrial catastrophes occurred before 1970.

The Roswell event took place over 45 years ago; many witnesses have died and those that remain are relying on very old memories. The potential for error is enormous. By way of comparison, we could look at a roughly contemporary case causing a current sensation of its own: that of Ivan the Terrible, the sadistic camp guard who terrorised Jewish prisoners at Treblinka.

Eighteen Treblinka survivors, working from photographs, positively identified retired Cleveland autoworker John Demjanjuk as Ivan the Terrible, and five of those witnesses, aged 61 to 86, actually confronted Demjanjuk in court in Israel and pointed him out as their tormentor. He was sentenced to death by hanging, but the conviction was overturned this year by the Israeli Supreme Court after new evidence had surfaced from KGB files. Whoever else Demjanjuk may have been (his name was originally Ivan and he apparently worked as a guard at the smaller Sobibor camp in Poland), he was almost certainly not Ivan the Terrible.

Factors leading to the misidentification probably included the eyewitnesses' age and the fallibility of their memories, as well as the desire to nail *someone* for the atrocities perpetrated at Treblinka. Hanging the wrong man, however, would hardly make for satisfactory revenge.

Could Roswell the Terrible be in similar straits, a complicated case of mistaken identity? Convicted as a balloon, was it really a space ship from another planet, or merely a curious artifact from that much larger (and greyer) area in between the two extremes? Memory would tell if it could.

Down In The Jungle

Michael Goss looks at the folklore of the Candyman

"To be buried while alive is, beyond question, the most terrific of those extremes which has ever fallen to the lot of mere mortality", declares the narrator of *The Premature Burial*. Far be it from me to argue with one who has evidently Been There and Bought the Tee Shirt, much less with he who made it possible for him to narrate of being prematurely buried, namely Edgar Allan Poe. But... "beyond question...?"

Is being inhumed alive really worse than getting trapped in a broken-down lift with someone who's just discovered Chaos Theory? Or, worse yet, with someone who thinks that the British National Party winning a seat at Millwall is a good thing?

From the creation of an early 19th century literary master to that of a late 20th century one, from Millwall to New York: in chapter one of Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, Sherman McCoy experiences "that deep worry that lives in the base of the skull of every resident of Park Avenue south of 96th Street": alone on the benighted street, he is accosted by a young, rangy black man. It's not merely the terrific extreme of mugging by a stereotypical mugger; as Wolfe has written elsewhere, the average American white male fears the average American black male because of the latter's suspected supernatural powers, his "Tarzan mumbo jungle voodoo". Could it be the same in darkest Millwall?

Our fears take the form of legends, sometimes. That's neither Poe nor Wolfe. It's a precis of something uttered by a contemporary folklore professor in *Candyman*, recently released on video and fairly essential if you want to see more in urban legends than amusing schlock-horror themes revisited.

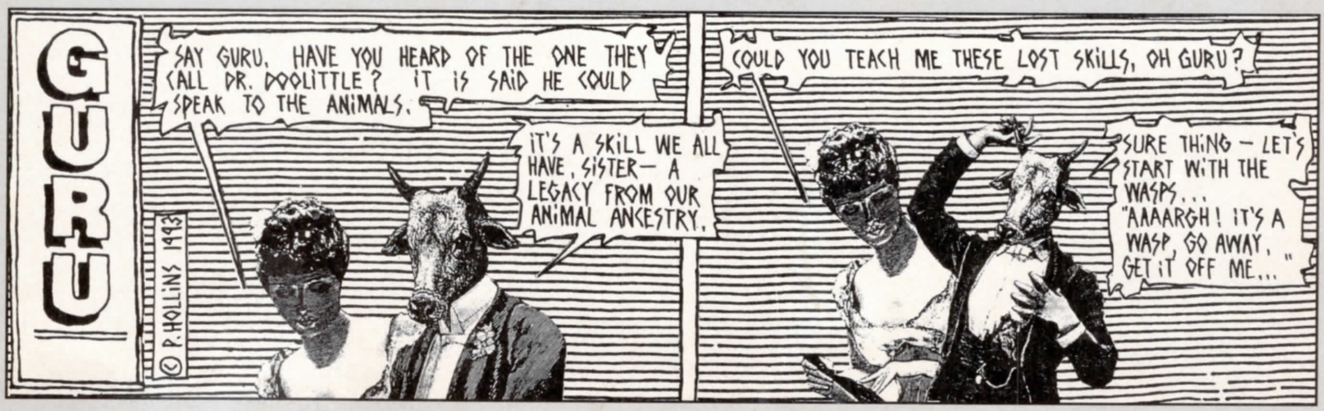
That *Candyman* **is** schlock-horror (or, if you prefer something more academic-sounding, New Gothick) is an unavoidable conclusion. It nods knowingly to the Dracula-Vampire mythos by having the statuesque and saturnine anti-hero strike impressive middle-distance poses reminiscent of Christopher Lee at his most dominant. The irresistible revenant forces a paranormal intimacy and soul-union upon the heroine with lines like "You will come to me ... The pain will be exquisite ... Come with me and be immortal ... You are mine now" – delivered in a wonderful, liquid, sexually charged depth of tone. There are vampire kisses, a sharp stick shoved in the region of the heart, a female victim carried in Candyman's muscular arms (again, Lee-fashion) and deposited upon an alter-like table. Etcetera etcetera.

"Is being inhumed alive really worse than getting trapped in a broken-down lift with someone who thinks that the British National Party winning a seat at Millwall is a good thing?"

But Candyman, urban maniac killer-ghost who can be invoked if you recite his name five times while looking in a mirror, is primarily a *black* urban legend. One in whom white academics can show suitable detached intellectual interest, but in whom the blacks of the grim, criminally-ruled Housing Projects believe actually and instinctively. You can only understand him if, like Helen the research-student heroine, you run the gauntlet of this Caucasian no-go zone. More – Candyman is a legend of black revenge. He slaughters those of his own colour, but what propels him through after-life is the ghoulish mutilation-murder perpetrated against him in 1890 when he was punished for loving and impregnating a white girl with social pretensions.

Urban legends not infrequently exploit white fears of blacks which it is uncool to confront openly: with deflating humour in the tale of the ostensible elevator-mugger who turns out to be Eddie Murphy, or more crudely in the case of the Castrated Boy who suffers terrible things in the washroom (a legend recalled in *Candyman*, incidentally). The central character here has that Wolfian mumbo jungle voodoo with a vengeance. It is a racist nightmare because it exceeds the material.

Two optimistic things remain to be said of *Candyman*. The first is that the end of the film brings the two communities together when the Project blacks attend Helen's funeral. Secondly, it reveals fictively the aforementioned mumbo jungle voodoo terrors which shape some of our legends – including those which inform the political policies of some recently-prominent right-wing groups... FT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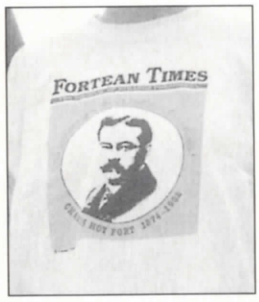

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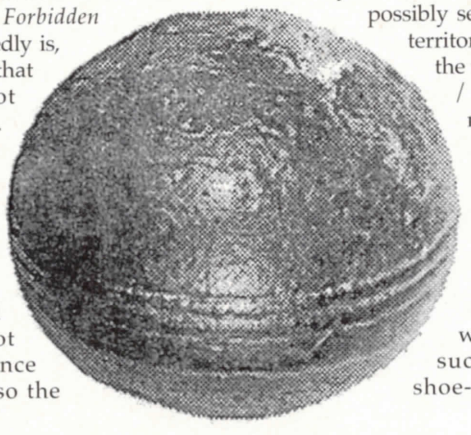
REVIEWS

FORBIDDEN ARCHEOLOGY

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE
by MICHAEL A. CREMO AND RICHARD L. THOMPSON

Once upon a time there was a new idea called 'evolution' and all the brave scientists and academics set off to find the evidence with which they could trace the origins of the human race. It was the 19th century and the evidence soon mounted up, got reported and interpreted; some of it was explained and some of it explained away. These days, of course, we have a nice cosy picture of the way it all happened and if we can just find a few more pieces of the jigsaw, then we can all live happily ever after ...

It isn't often that one can say that a book is truly imbued with the Fortean spirit, but *Forbidden Archeology* undoubtedly is, in spite of the fact that Fort's name is not mentioned once. Cremo and Thompson have launched a startling attack on our whole picture of human origins and the way that we've arrived at that picture: not only is the evidence impugned, but also the scientific method of handling it.



A Pre-Cambrian cricket-ball? This metallic sphere was found in strata said to be 2.8million years old, in South Africa.

The book falls into two main sections, the first dealing with anomalous evidence (finds which seem to contradict the dominant view of human evolution), the second with defects in the accepted evidence on which that view is based. But just as important as the evidence itself are the preconceptions of the interpreters, and C & T manage to demonstrate how, as the prevailing dominant built up, those preconceptions became more important than the quality of the evidence, thus consigning the anomalous to oblivion.

C & T have taken on an enormous task. Much of the anomalous evidence dates from the 19th century and exists now only as reports; the extensive quotation from those reports accounts in large part for the vast size of the book. Beyond that, the controversy over each piece of evidence is fully covered, and we're allowed to see the process of exclusion at work, with its accusations of misinterpretation, its hints of cheating and its simple "I'm a more famous scholar than you ..." And yet, of course, many of the adherents of the anomalous were among the most famous scholars of their day, and such technical matters as the stratification of deposits were as well understood then as now. Indeed, more than a century later, there still remain serious questions about our modern dating methods, as is pointed out in a lengthy appendix.

There are occasions where the book strays into the more familiar (and possibly sensational) Fortean territory by dealing with the notion that the yeti / sasquatch / wildmen reports suggest co-existence of species rather than linear evolution, and with more outrageous anomalies (though handled with suitable reserve) such as apparent shoe-prints in ancient strata and puzzling artefacts found in solid coal. For the most part, however, it deals scrupulously with matters of palæoanthropological record. It might be thought that 900 pages of detailed material on anomalously dated flint tools, broken bones and fragmentary skeletons might not make the most absorbing reading, but by providing the human controversies as well, the authors tell a gripping story. Thus, with a clear conscience, one is able to say "I couldn't put the book down", rather than simply "I couldn't pick it up"!

C & T avowedly believe that modern man has been upon this earth longer than currently believed and that our picture of human origins is seriously flawed. Be that as it may, they appear to have given a commendably even-handed treatment of the material and have certainly made a compelling case for its re-examination, both accepted and anomalous. Their own ideas on human origins are deferred to a promised second volume. If you have any interest in fossil humanity or, perhaps more importantly, the way scientists put together our picture of the universe, then you ought to read this vast and surprisingly cheap book ...

Govardhan Hill Publishing, 1380 Garnet Ave, Suite E-5, San Diego, CA 92109, USA - or in UK, Bhaktivedanta Books, Box 324, Borehamwood, Herts WD6 1NB. 1993, hb $39.95 or £28.95 (inc. post), pp952, index, bib, illus, tables.

Steve Moore

THE PARANORMAL YEAR: 1993

By Jenny Randles

This annual record of the previous year's odd doings is a nice idea as far as it goes ... however, this is not far enough to be the record for posterity one presumes is intended. Jenny charges rather breathlessly through 10 major categories of phenomena, from a few general science oddities to ghosts, psychic questing and cryptozoology, but she is at her most interesting in those areas – like UFOs, crop circles, ETs and NDEs – which she has actively researched.

This is an idiosyncratic progress report of which a number of features could be usefully developed in any further yearbooks – the 'top 10' listing of favourite cases should be extended to include selections by other researchers *and some references;* the review chapters on books and the media should be more complete; and so could the reference section of useful contacts.

Robert Hale, London. 1993. hb £15.99, pp192, refs, index.

Bob Rickard

PRIME CHAOS

By Phil Hine

With his first full-length book on Chaos Magic, Phil Hine shows himself to be one of the leading thinkers in the field ... and, perhaps, one of the least dogmatic. Rather than laying down specific guidelines, Hine is more interested in exploring the *mechanics* of magic practices ... how rituals are constructed, how magical groups work together (or otherwise), how 'reality' can be transformed.

It's this last aspect that should be of particular interest to Forteans, for in so many of our cases (e.g. UFO abductions) a transformation in the perception of reality occurs with apparent spontaneity. If it's possible to make such an alteration with conscious intent, as a magician would claim, then whether reality is actually changed or only perceived to be changed (if there's any difference between the two anyway), obviously this is something worthy of study. How much more so if 'reality' is such a flexible concept that it's possible to work with, and get results from, a purely fictional system such as Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos. Excellent and intriguing stuff.

Chaos International, London. 1993, pb £10.00, pp144, bib. (Mail order: £11.00 from Chaos International, BM Sorcery, London, WC1N 3XX)

Steve Moore

THE ONLY PLANET OF CHOICE

Compiled by Phyllis V. Schlemma and Palden Jenkins

Unwritten history is a safe refuge – you can say what you like about the ancient past with little fear of contradiction. Similarly, you can claim that any intelligent beings live anywhere in the universe – save, perhaps, in our Solar system – and nobody can prove you wrong.

Add together these elements, and mix in a claim by one individual that she receives copious mental messages from a non-human intelligence and you have the premise of *The Only Planet of Choice*, an impressively produced, substantial and literate book subtitled 'Essential Briefings from Deep Space'. The non-human entity is Tom, emanuensis and general messenger for the all-knowing, cosmic 'Council of Nine' who, apparently, live "beyond the Universe".

To afford the book respectability, much is made of the support and interest of some slightly famous people, like David Hemery and the late Gene Roddenberry ... but it is a book of ancient history, cosmology, philosophy and moral instruction, *not* a book about hurdling or making SF programmes for TV.

The 'history' is unprovable and untestable. For example: "The civilisation Hoova, in charge of your planet Earth elevation at this time, seeded your planet Earth three times. Your myth of Adam and Eve came in after the first installation by the Hoovoids." The cosmology is unlikely: "Those that have been seeded on this planet Earth have also been seeded in other systems in your galaxy. The Pleiades are in your Earth galaxy."

The philosophy and moral instruction is rather uncaring and unimaginative. The Nine offer no way to cure cancer, no way to control the weather, the sea, earthquakes or epidemics and no miracle food to alleviate world hunger. The wisdom of the Nine is restricted to very specific, much less significant areas.

The best test of the origin of any communication alleged to be from any non-human source is simply this ... is there any content that could not have been available to those who are passing the message on to us? For all this book's extravagant suppositions, there is nothing here that passes that test.

Gateway Books, Bath. 1993, hb £14.95, pb £9.95, pp398, notes, index.

Kevin McClure

Dreamtime, Dreamspace

SHAMANISM AND THE MYSTERY LINES

By Paul Devereux

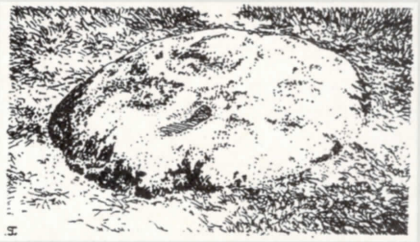
Quantum, London, 1992, pb £7.99, pp238, index, refs, illus.

SYMBOLIC LANDSCAPES

By Paul Devereux

Gothic Image, Glastonbury, 1992, pb £14.95, pp192, index, refs, bib, illus, b/w + colour photos.

Fashions come and go in all things, and this is as obvious to Paul Devereux as anyone else: thus he spends the first half of *Shamanism and the Mystery Lines* providing us with a potted history of the whole ley-line/earth mystery field that runs through the theories from Watkins' *Old Straight Track* to the present. It's an eminently sensible and laudably humane review of an area where theories abound, keeping the useful and gently disposing of the useless, and it clears the decks before Devereux moves on to present a new interpretation which forces us to put aside our preconceptions and view the landscape with new eyes: the eyes of the shaman.



A 'dreamstone' in Lithuania, with engraved footprint.

Shamanic landscapes turn up in both books in fact, and it has to be said that there is a certain amount of overlap between the two. The emphasis is different however: *Shamanism* ... concentrates on interpreting the land's linear markings in terms of shamanic magical flight and the out-of-the-body experience, while Symbolic Landscapes is more concerned with shamanic modelling of the entire landscape, and takes the Avebury complex as its exemplar. Even so, reading the two together one does get the impression that we're dealing with material that would have been better handled as one large book, rather than two medium ones.

This quibble aside, I have to say that I found both books very worthwhile reading, with a lot of careful research and many thought-provoking ideas. Quite apart from the earth mystery aspects, Devereux's investigations throw interesting light on various ways that we encounter 'reality', from dreams and trances to 'waking' UFO encounters, mythology, and much else besides. And I, for one, am pleased to see him bold enough to weave the tale of his own personal investigations into the more academic material at his command.

And yet ... and yet ... at the back of my mind is that slight niggling worry that, after all those other fashions, shamanism may be just another whose turn has now come. But that, of course, only time will tell ...

Steve Moore

A THEORY OF ALMOST EVERYTHING

By Robert Barry

Notable for the modesty of its title, this layman's index of the current state of human thought and knowledge is readable, stimulating and surprisingly unsensational. Barry, a statistician and doctor of psychology, conducts a whirlwind tour of psychology, physics and evolution theory which is useful to anyone without a scientific background, but he is most lucid in his own sphere.

We are told that research for the book took ten years and converted the author from an agnostic who believed that an omnipotent science had all the answers ... but what is Dr Barry now? The non-scientific aspects of the book have a distinctly Christian tone – this religion, for example, receives more than double the space and enthusiasm given to other world religions in his survey. His view of spiritual phenomena is entrenched in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *National Geographic* school in which astrology is only for the gullible, philosophy only began in Graeco-Roman times (no discussion of 'Wisdom of the Ancients' here), and the 'mystical state' is only a passive one that cannot be induced. The history and influence of Magickal arts and sciences is completely ignored, even when the author acknowledges they might contain the very answers he commendably seeks.

The book emphasises the interconnectedness of all things, and that the 'illusion of separateness' is at the root of many modern problems. This leads Dr Barry to propose a theory of a universe divided into seven 'dimensions' which he claims is original. He explains it neatly and clearly and it is surely a welcome contribution to the emerging 'subjective sciences' and all the more refreshing coming from a scientist.

The New Age can only go forward if it discards as well as creates, and only if it leads beyond comfortable territory will it become revolutionary and inevitably dangerous. This *Theory of Almost Everything* is neither revolutionary nor dangerous – though its urging towards mysticism and promotion of the Baha'i faith as an ideal interface between all religions will seem progressive to some. The New Age must be more than new bricks on old foundations, but, for now, a little extra height is always welcome.

Oneworld, Oxford. 1993, hb £9.95, $18.95; pp200, notes, bib, index.

Alex Brattell

THE DAMNED UNIVERSE OF CHARLES FORT

By Louis Kaplan

In principle, of course, any book that helps bring Fort's work to the attention of a wider audience should be welcomed, and as a sampler of his prose (some 20-odd pages from each of the four books), this works very well. Beyond that, though, it's deeply flawed, mainly because Kaplan has decided to write the remaining half of the book himself: and Kaplan has learned nothing of the lucidity, wit or intelligence of the man whose work he reproduces and professes to admire.

Perhaps the greatest mystery here is how anyone involved with the book, from author to publisher, can expect the reader to get through the 20-page introduction without having had every vestige of interest in Charles Fort totally eradicated. Kaplan is obviously more concerned with writing something "intellectual" than telling us anything about Fort, and the result is a morass of painfully laboured puns, desperate cleverness and vapid posturing which is perhaps the most pretentious and unintelligible drivel it has ever been my misfortune to read.

His concluding chapter, 'Telepathic Technologies', is marginally better, purporting to be a proposal for the establishment of an Institute of Telepathy to investigate the (mainly commercial) potential of certain concepts, such as teleportation, originated by Fort. Yet Kaplan seems incapable of doing more than quoting a passage from Fort and saying, in effect, "wouldn't it be great if we could learn how to do this". There is no constructive thought here as to *how* the investigation might be carried out, or even (with regard to military applications) *why*; and one is left once again with the conclusion that this is no more than a literary piece, an empty display of "Kaplanism" rather than Forteanism. For masochists and completists only.

Autonomedia, New York, 1993, pb, pp156, illus. Available in UK (£8.70 incl. p+p) from Counter Productions, PO Box 556, London SE5 0RL.

Norma Mysta Nosegay

MagWatch

Two Fortean-related magazines have changed hands recently. **THE CEREALOGIST**, after three years in the hands of its founders John Michell, designer Richard Adams and his son Sam, Christine Rhone, and Patrick Harpur (novelist brother of our cartoonist Merrily) is conducting business as usual under a new team led by George Wingfield and John, Lord Haddington. Issue 10 (Autumn 1993) proves the field is still active (so to speak), and includes much anger at the exploits of Jim Schnabel.

In the USA, an ideological split has riven the International Fortean Organisation forcing the withdrawal of former president Ray Manners and his supporters. We understand that the remnant will continue to produce its excellent **INFO JOURNAL**, and that Manners himself wants to publish a Fortean magazine. The last *Journal* (June 1993) had research into the discovery of a prehistoric crocodile skeleton In New Jersey in the mid-1800s, beneath which was found a Roman coin – a fascinating antiquarian conundrum.

The other prominent independent Fortean mag in the States is **STRANGE**, edited by our colleague Mark Chorvinsky, who tells us he plans to publish three times a year from 1994. Its long, dense articles and experimental graphic style might daunt the less dedicated Fortean, but it is always worth the effort. Each issue carries a themed clutch of articles – the current issue (#10, Summer 1993) revaluates Lovecraft in a Fortean context.

Two smaller – but no-less dedicated – mags of Fortean-related interest deserve a mention ... **ALIEN SCRIPTURE** is a new venture from Kevin McClure, and devoted to an erudite analysis of channelled material – motto: "If we are not alone, then who is speaking to us and what are they saying?" **THE JOURNAL OF METEOROLOGY**, edited and published by Dr Terence Meaden, is a good example of high standards in an independent science publication and often includes phenomena of the kind that interests us (ball lightning, unseasonal or extreme weather, odd vortices, etc).

Bob Rickard

■ ***Alien Scripture:*** *42 Victoria Road, Mount Charles, St Austell, Cornwall, UK.* ■ ***The Cerealogist:*** *20 Paul St, Frome, Somerset BA11 1DX, UK.* ■ ***INFO:*** *Box 367, Arlington, VA 22210-0367, USA.* ■ ***Journal of Meteorology:*** *54 Frome Rd, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1LD, UK.* ■ ***Strange Magazine:*** *Box 2246, Rockville, MD20847, USA.*

ALSO RECEIVED

● **OTHER MERIDIANS: ANOTHER GREENWICH** by Jack Gale. A look at the geomantic and sacred significance of Greenwich, its alternative history, alignments, tunnels and psychic phenomena, etc. We need more of this sort of in-depth research. *Adelphi Press, London, 1993, pb £4.95, pp102, bib, illus, photos.*

● **FANDEMONIUM!** by Judy and Fred Vermorel, is a clipper's guide to showbiz consumerism from the fan's viewpoint. There are three chapters – a twirl through dance crazes from Tango to Disco; a 'Strange Days' style sampling of allegedly true stories about the extremes of fandom and cults; and a mainly pictorial essay on showbiz, hysteria and fetishism. It's a good idea, but too many pictures are printed too large to allow for depth or width of reaction. *Omnibus Press, Book Sales Ltd, 8/9 Frith St, London W1V 5TZ. 1992, pb £9.95, pp128, illus.*

● **GMICALZOMA** An Enochian Dictionary by Leo Vinci. In the 16th century Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelly used skrying techniques to take down a number of messages from the Angelic world, in the 'Enochian' language. Vinci provides both Enochian-English and English-Enochian lexicons, with biographical and explanatory material. *Neptune Press, London, 1992, pb £9.50, pp136, illus.*

● **THE BEAST WITHIN** by Adam Douglas. Yet another look at the history and lore of the werewolf, from ancient myth to modern cinema. A reasonable introductory volume which rounds up all the usual explanatory suspects: shamans, hallucinogens, porphyria, 'wild children', psychopathology, etc. The dust-jacket illustration is a dreadful piece of junk. *Chapmans, London, 1992, hb £15.99, pp294, index, refs, illus.*

● **SELL YOURSELF TO SCIENCE** by Jim Hogshire. The complete guide to selling your organs and body fluids. The cover blurb says it best: "Learn how to harvest your body while you're alive and how to sell the leftovers once you're gone." Tap your human potential! A drug developed from one man's spleen earned him millions. Weirdly entertaining. *Loompanics, Port Townsend, Washington, pp160, 1992, £12.45 (incl.p+p) from Counter Productions, PO Box 556, London SE5 0RL.*

● **SCHWA** by Bill Barker. *Schwa*, represented by an upside-down e in pronunciation tables, stands for "the indeterminate vowel sound of most syllables not stressed in English". For Barker, it is the symbol for indeterminate menace or wordless dread. This picture book of stick people and spare ovals presents a surreal narrative involving aliens. As SubGenius guru Ivan Stang says: "It isn't really about UFO abductions. It's about religion, belief, self-subjugation and all control systems ... Somehow Barker manages to sum up the mystery and terror of the UFO experience in a non-verbal way." On one page, Barker gives some deathless instructions - "In case of abduction: 1. Remain where you are. 2. Give or do whatever they ask. 3. Forget everything that happens." *Schwa Press, Box 6064, Reno NV 89513-6064, 1993, pp76, £4.50 (incl.p+p) from Mark Pawson, PO Box 664, London E3 4QR. Mark also sells SubGenius stuff.*

● **THE AVALONIANS** by Patrick Benham. Essential reading for those interested in the lure of Glastonbury and the motley of colourful characters associated with the place since the 1906 discovery of a blue glass bowl, rumoured to be the Holy Grail, in St Bride's Well. The cast includes Basil Wilberforce, Fiona MacLeod, Bernard Shaw, A.E. Waite, Annie Besant and Frederick Bligh Bond. The in-depth, never-before-told story of the Glastonbury Revival long before New Age Yoof arrived. *Gothic Image, 7 High St, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9DP. 1993, pb £12.95, pp286, photos, index.*

● **GHOSTS AND LEGENDS OF YORKSHIRE** by Andy Roberts. Mainly concentrating on ghosts, but broadening out into mystery animals, UFOs and more straightforward folklore and legend, with a chapter for each geographical region of the county. Occasionally one could wish for a little more detail, but Andy Roberts has certainly packed in the material here, and the sheer quantity of cases is fairly astonishing. Recommended. *Jarrold, Norwich, 1992, pb, pp128, photos, bib. £5.50 (inc p+p) from Andy Roberts, 84 Elland Rd, Brighouse, W.Yorkshire HD6 2QR.*

● **THE BEST OF BRITISH MEN** and **THE BEST OF BRITISH WOMEN.** These two heavily-illustrated books are organised by occupation, so that pawn brokers jostle with party organisers, astronomers with head porters, TV personalities with chiropractors. The lookalikes sections are particularly amusing, but we were sorry not to find any swindlers or serial killers. Under 'Paranormal' we find Janet Bord, Caroline Wise, Jenny Randles, Mary Caine, Susan Blackmore, Serena Roney-Dougal, Paul Devereux, Hilary Evans, Arthur Ellison, Andrew Collins, Maurice Gosse, Brian Inglis – and FT editors Bob Rickard and Paul Sieveking. These books seem too quaintly arbitrary to be much use for reference; but they're fun for browsing. *Reed Illustrated Books, 1993. hb £14.99 each, pp346 each, photos, indexes.*

● **THE COLDRUM LINE** by F. Russell Clampitt and Leslie J. Peters. This modest booklet brings together a series of articles that ran in *IGNews* in 1979 and 1980, and details the authors' discoveries of a strong ley running roughtly northwards through Kent and East Anglia to the mysterious 'Witch Ground' in the North Sea, as evidenced by ancient stones, landscape features and associated folkore. Interesting. *Akhelarre Publications, Box 3, Llandeilo, Dyfed SA19 6JY. 1993, pb, price unknown, pp36.*

● **EXTRA SENSORY PERCEPTION** by Alastair W. MacLellan. A curiously intriguing booklet which sets out the author's ideas linking brain physiology with psychical phenomena, spiritualism, and Theosophical ideas about 'etheric bodies', leading to a theory of clairaudience and clairvoyance based on a kind of radiation from the brain. To date, this radiation is only inferred from several odd experiments (described herein), and the author pleads for their replication. A "hither-to closely-guarded secret of witchcraft" is said to be revealed in the text, but this uninitiated reviewer failed to recognised it. *Excalibur Press of London, 13 Knightsbridge Green, London SW1X 7QL. 1992, price unknown, pp40, bib.*

● **THE LITTLE DUTCH BOY** by Ronald Hearn. Mr Hearn is a medium with a considerable reputation, and this is his solid account of 15 taped communications allegedly with a young boy who had died of leukæmia and which impressed the boy's parents as being authentic. It provides an excellent glimpse into a medium's life, beliefs and methods, but whether it will convince you of the existence of an afterlife depends on the level of evidence you require. *The Book Guild, Lewes, Sussex. 1993, hb £14.95, pp298.*

Steve Moore, Bob Rickard, Paul Sieveking.

S LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

MEETING PAN

■ In the spring of 1964, when I was 16, I was staying in a village in South Wales, at the home of Peter, a friend I had made the previous year. One evening, Peter suggested we try a 'Wine Glass Seance'. I was uneasy about this, having heard of potentially harmful side-effects, but was not confident enough to say so.

I would telephone my parents periodically when I was away from home, and I decided to make one of the calls that evening. While Peter was setting the table for the seance, I walked the quarter mile alone to the telephone box in the village centre, as there was no phone in the house.

It was quite dark and the street lighting barely adequate, but I set off happily enough, rehearsing what I would say. After about 100 yards, I got that 'some-one is behind you' feeling. I was slightly annoyed with myself for succumbing, but I couldn't resist turning round and looking. As expected, there was no one there and the feeling disappeared. I continued on my way. The sensation, when it almost immediately returned, was stronger, and it felt as though the mysterious entity was walking with its toes actually touching my heels and never losing contact as we walked. Again I turned, again the sensation disappeared, again it returned, almost immediately, as I continued.

This time, the impression had taken on another dimension. I felt it was head-and-shoulders taller than myself and was walking on tip-toe! What on earth was going on? Was this the Devil? Had all this talk of seances conjured some entity? I looked again, turning full circle this time. Nothing! I felt decidedly uncomfortable as I continued walking. I was getting near the village centre by this time; surely if this was a creature of darkness it would be disturbed by the brighter light of the shopping area, and would leave me alone.

As I neared the friendly neon of the shops, my perception of the entity increased as it seemed to manifest ever more strongly. It was towering over me, even though I was already near my adult height of over six feet. It was, as before, walking on tip-toe and literally on my heels and I became aware that it was laughing at me – not a malicious laugh, but a teasing, playful, mischievous laugh. I knew then that whatever or whoever it was meant me no harm.

I tried something I had read about in book on the paranormal. I turned around and, while concentrating on trying to project caring, loving thoughts, said quietly and carefully: "Are you a troubled spirit, can I help you?" I hadn't the faintest idea what I would do if it said "Yes", but the problem didn't rise. As I finished speaking, I got the impression of absolute amazement, followed by the sensation of the entity moving away from me at enormous speed somewhere to my right front. The feeling was exactly like that cartoon image of Wile E. Coyote falling into a canyon and becoming, within a second or so, a vanishing pinpoint. When I continued on my way, the sensation had gone, and never returned.

I made my telephone call and returned to tell my tale, but nobody was particularly interested. During the seance, we apparently contacted a Roman centurion. Peter asked him how he had died and the glass moved rapidly and apparently randomly, whereupon I broke contact by removing my finger. I felt we had gone far enough.

Many years later, during the 1970s, I came upon a book about the Findhorn Foundation containing a lucid account of a meeting with Pan on Edinburgh's Princes Street. The description of Pan, whom I'd always thought to be quite small, was intriguing. Half man, half goat, some seven and a half feet tall, and walking with apparent ease on the tips of his hooves, he has a wonderfully warm, jovial, bubbling personality that constantly bursts out in shouts of laughter. No-one but the narrator saw him, and they walked up and down Princes Street with Pan's arm round the shoulders of his human companion. For myself, I was left wondering about that night in Wales.

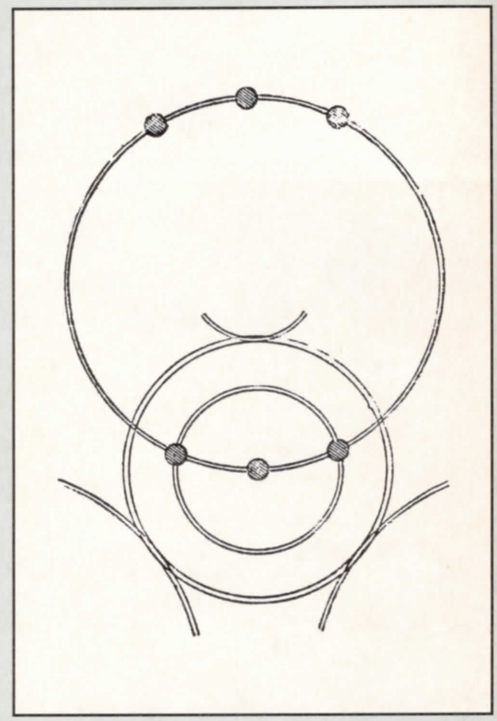
After seeing Michael Bentine's one-man show, 'From the Ridiculous to the Paranormal' in September 1992, I wrote him an account of my strange experience, and he phoned me to talk about it. He said I had encountered a Pan archetype. Such meetings, he said, are a rare event and not always pleasant. People who had been cruel to animals, in particular, meet a fearsome and vengeful entity. He then, unprompted, endorsed my own belief that I would have another visit. I await that meeting with interest!

John D. Ritchie
Doncaster, South Yorkshire

SOLAR PHENOMENON

■ This photo of an 'upside-down rainbow' **below** was taken by a gamekeeper on a North Wales estate, and witnessed by others. The rainbow appeared above the trees and below the clouds, and the sun was behind the photographer. I was assured that it wasn't part of a 'solar halo'.

Nigel Jones
Chester, Cheshire



EDITORS' REPLY: *Despite those assurances, Nigel, it is highly likely that this inverted arc is indeed part of a parhelion (or sun-dog), most of which was probably too faint to be seen. The diagram **right** shows the major elements of the phenomenon – caused by the refraction of sunlight through ice crystals in the atmosphere – only parts of which are usually seen at any time, the whole quite rarely. Your photo seems to show the top-centre one of three inverted bows which form tangentially to the main circle of about 22 degrees diameter.*

MUNCHAUSEN'S SYNDROME

■ I loved FT70, especially the very interesting and provocative section on Münchausenianism. In fact, I haven't seen a model that seems to fit so much Fortean data since Persinger argued his case for geomagnetic fluctuations that can cause real energy anomalies together with altered brain waves and hallucinations. A blend of Münchausen syndrome and Persinger magnetic wobbles may account for a good deal of the madness of the planet...? Maybe?

Tim Leary in Los Angeles a few weeks ago: "I have found a new way to get high and spacey for hours and it's legal. It's called senility. It improves long-term memory – in walking to the kitchen I remember fighting another kid when we were four and all my grade school teachers and my first date. It destroys short-term memory – when I get to the kitchen, I don't know why I went there. And I forget the third effect." Leary is 13 years older than me, but I see more and more of these memory lapses in all my contemporaries, including myself.

Do you know what Alan Watts said to the hot-dog salesperson? "Make me one with everything".

Robert Anton Wilson
Santa Cruz, California

FLASHES IN THE DARK

■ With regard to the 'Blue Flash' [***FT70:8***]: I've seen this phenomenon and similar ones myself many times. I first noticed it on a meteor watch in 1983 when I needed to change the batteries on my red-covered torch while still out in the field. The red cover (to prevent ruining my dark adaptation) was provided by several layers of red cellophane attached to the torch cover with masking tape. As I pulled the tape away from the torch body to allow access to the battery cover, I noticed a line of yellow light where the tape was pulling away. Investigation quickly revealed that this was the adhesive, not the tape or the torch body.

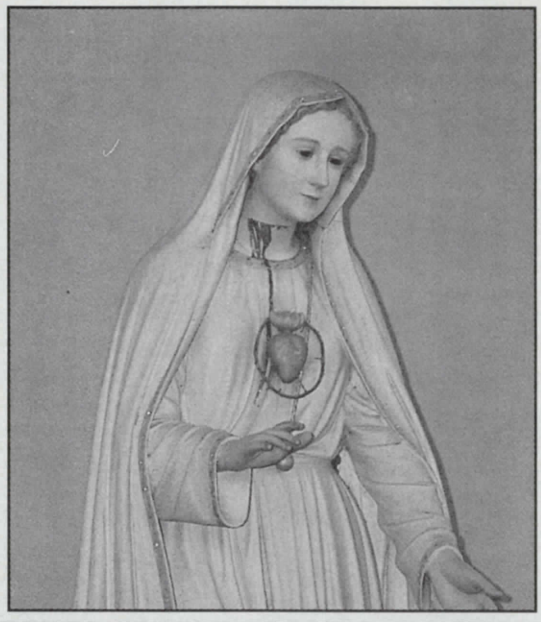
Subsequent experiments indicated that all types of self-adhesive tape produce this effect, including self-sealing envelopes, some producing a blue or purple light (particularly envelopes), others a yellow or white glow. The best type, for which the effect is most pronounced in my experience, is Sellotape's masking tape. It seems to have just the right mix of adhesion and ease of pulling to generate the effect for a long period (a great way to use up large amounts of it rather wastefully!) The light is not bright enough to do anything useful with, but it is fascinating to watch.

There is another phenomenon which I'm certain I must have seen for many years, but which only in the last year have I came to recognise. This is called the Blue Arcs of the Retina. It was first described by Purkyne (now usually written Purkinje) in 1825, spotted while kindling a fire. To see the effect (and anyone with normal colour vision should be able to do so), you need a dark room with a small red or orange light in it – the small lights on a central heating clock, or the LEDs of a clock or TV will do very nicely. As you look slightly to one side of the red light, a short blue arc should flash across your vision.

The effect is best seen before the eyes are fully dark-adapted (this usually takes up to 20-30 minutes for normal eyes). The nature of the arcs is still unknown, as far as I can ascertain, but the shape is virtually identical to some of the nerve fibres in the retina. Experiments have shown that this is not due to bioluminescence of the fibres, however, and it remains something of a mystery. Anyone wanting to find out more should refer to "On demonstrating the blue arcs phenomenon" by J.D. Moreland in *Vision Research* (1968) (vol.8, pp.99-107.)

Alastair McBeath
Morpeth, Northumberland

EDITORS' NOTE: *Thanks to all those who wrote to us about odd flashes in the dark – from packs of photographic developing paper and polyester clothing (Gary Buckham); from a partially-collapsed plastic bottle (Ian Clifford); from self-seal envelopes (D. Willis); from a beach of wet sand (Andy Inman); and from peppermints (Ian Liston-Smith).*



QUAKE MIRACLE

■ On 12 December 1992, an earthquake (Richter scale 7) on the Indonesian island of Flores killed 2,700 people and destroyed many buildings, including three quarters of the town of Maumere where my daughter Sharon lives while she teaches English as part of Voluntary Service Overseas.

In one destroyed church, a statue of the Virgin Mary (illustrated here) looks as if her throat is cut and bleeding. This happened at the time of the quake and the local people are in awe of it. My husband and I visited the island earlier this year and made a video of the statue.

Eileen Lavery
Torquay, Devon

LOCALISED COMBUSTIONS

■ There is one aspect of the phenomenon of spontaneous human combustion (SHC) which has not received much attention, but which should be carefully considered by those who believe that SHC exists as a well-documented occurrence. The geographical and demographical spread of SHC is all wrong or, at the very least, makes little sense. Of 120 apparent cases listed in the Appendix to Jenny Randles' and Peter Hough's *Spontaneous Human Combustion* (1992), 53 (44%) took place in Britain, 35 (29%) in the USA, 9(8%) in Ireland and the remaining 23 cases everywhere else on earth. Of the 41 cases between 1970 and 1990, 20 took place in Britain, 11 in the USA and one each in Canada, Singapore and Hungary.

Such a geographical distribution of what is presumably a random phenomenon is, I would suggest, statistically impossible; indeed, if this account of the frequency of SHC is accurate, its geographical occurrence is more extraordinary than the phenomenon itself. Great Britain, with just over one per cent of the world's population, has been the locale of nearly 50% of all cases during the past 20 years.

Three explanations might be offered for this distribution. Most obviously, the vast majority of SHC cases in other countries remain unknown to researchers in Britain and America, being reported – if at all – only in provincial foreign language newspapers inaccessible to them. The problem here is that not a single case has been reported in this century in France, Germany, Japan, or Scandinavia, while it is simply impossible to believe that not a single case is known to our researchers from China, India or Latin America – where there must be dozens every year. The last known case in Ireland occurred in 1889, although eight others had been reported between 1800 and 1889: again, a virtual impossibility.

Secondly, assuming that the reported geographical distribution of SHC is indeed accurate, one must look to some geographical, meteorological, demographic, dietary, or life-style factor or factors to explain it. This might be a fruitful approach, although the obvious question here is – what?

Thirdly, one might bear in mind that far more ghosts have been reported in England than in any other country, just as more UFOs have been 'sighted' in the USA. A sceptic might offer the most obvious explanation of all of these strange distributional patterns – that Britain and America contain far more credulous people than any other country.

Professor Bill Rubinstein
Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

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● **GLASGOW FORTEAN SOCIETY.** Next meeting 26 January 1994 at 7.30pm. Society of Musicians, 73, Berkeley Street, Glasgow. New members very welcome. Further details: Desi Atkinson tel 041 339 5725.

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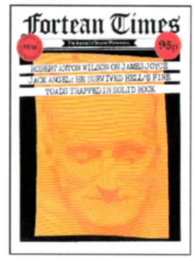
For credits for this issue see page 20.

BACK ISSUES

37 Australia's lizard monsters, encounters with Greek gods, falls of crabs, UK bear scare.

38 Visions of the Virgin Mary, US cattle mutilations, objects penetrating brains.



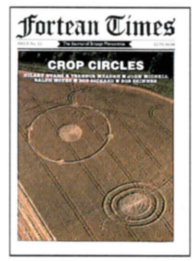
39 Jack Angel - did he survive spontaneous combustion? Chinese hair clipping panic.

43 The Cottlingley fairy photos, humans with horns, ice falls, who was Columbus?

44 Indian wolf boy, British big cat survey, werewolves, falls and a teleporting astrologer.

51 Lizard Man and the Big Muddy Monster, mystery submarines, the Turin Shroud.

52 Hoax issue: the Archaeopteryx fossil scandal, cold fusion. Plus humans with tails.



53 Crop circle theories, Soviet UFO landing flap, Islamic simulacra, slime creatures invade.

54 Yeti revelations, the ancient Greeks and men in the moon, moving bogs, inept crime.

55 Hauntings, waking the dead, the King of Tonga's sacred bats, holy aubergines.

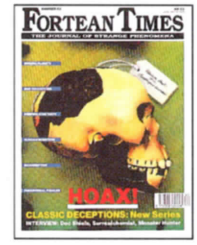
56 Giant octopuses, close encounters, hairy children, phantom hitchhikers, odd eels.

57 Satanic ritual abuse, phantom social workers, green children, Filipino gives birth to fish.

58 New format. Lesbian vampires, phantom pirates, fainting goats, porcupines loose in Devon, holes in heads.

60 Father Christmas as Odin, planes chased by clouds, alien abductions, Lake Erie monster, Jewish fish lore.

61 Pre-Columbian discoveries of America, UFO scares, record cat treks, everlasting lightbulbs, Virgin Mary in mildew.



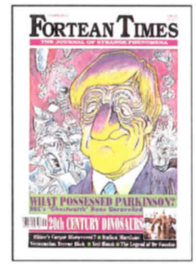
62 Strange deaths, Russian monsters, obsessive rubbish collectors, puddle-creating polts, Piltdown Man hoax.

63 New larger format. Acid tattoo panic, crop circles in colour, US stigmatic, Lobsang Rampa.

64 Stephen Spielberg's Fortean themes, giant killer wave, Alternative 3 hoax, Michael Bentine.

65 The Martian face, UFO spotters' guide, Taiwan's elephant man, bizarre break-ins.

66 Giant penguin panic, Alaska's cities in the sky, blasphemous shoes, Julian Cope.



67 Yeti hunts, Gambian sea monster, BBC's Ghostwatch spoof, dinosaur survivals.

68 Vampires and horse rippers, talking ghost, Satanism in Lyon, the Angels of Mons.

69 Who are the Circlemakers? Cannibalism in China, Red Mercury, extinct moa sighted.

70 Incredible dog treks, Vancouver dragon, fainting Swedes, attack of the eight foot birds.

71 Our guide to alien invaders, flying goat, memories of hell, a modern stigmatic.

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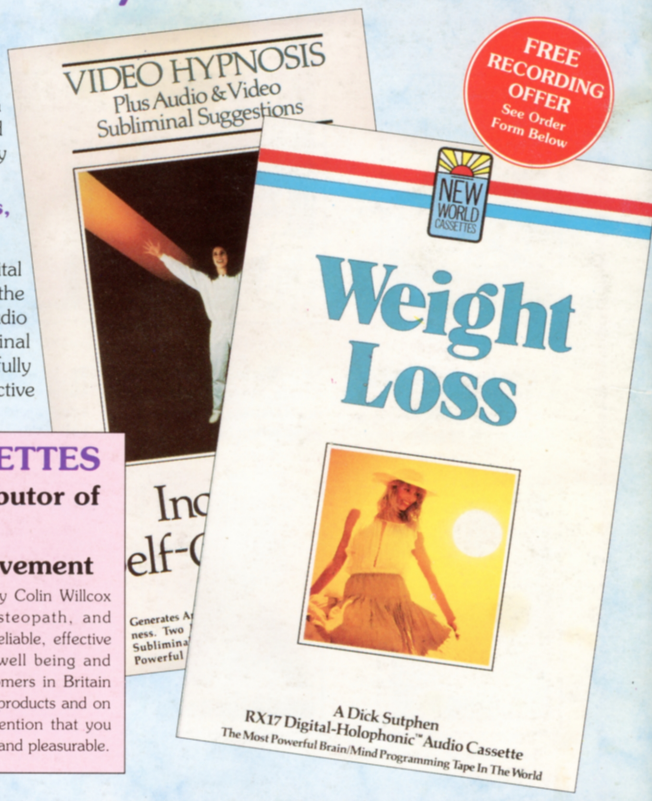

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